

How Far Would You Go – Prologue

It began after dinner one evening.

She asked, “How far would you go to protect your family?”

“Against what?”

“Take your pick, a natural or man-made disaster, a home intruder, anything. It doesn’t matter what, how far would you go to protect us?”

“Given your reluctance to describe the event, my answer would have to be a general answer; as far as it would take. Maybe what you want to know is whether or not I’d use reasonable force in the circumstances. I would do that. Would I shoot someone for trespassing? Probably not unless that person represented a real threat. If there is one thing I do know, it’s that the standard has always been reasonable force.”

“If a stranger tried to hurt me or the girls?”

“I’d use whatever force was necessary to stop him and hold him until you called the cops.”

“Does that include capping him?”

“If necessary, yes. What brought this subject up?”

“I read an article in a newspaper online and the husband called the cops but didn’t try to prevent the assault.”

“Sometimes his gun is bigger than yours or you get caught flatfooted. There could be any number of reasons why the man acted as he did. Where was this?”

“New York.”

“That should have clued you in, they have the Sullivan Act. You have to get a permit to simply purchase a handgun, etc. Not that long ago, you couldn’t carry concealed here. We became a shall issue state in 2003.”

“I remember. The first thing you did was meet the requirements and get a permit. Doesn’t that big old Kimber pull your pants down in back?”

“I tighten my belt. It’s a little on the heavy side, but I don’t much care for those plastic handguns.”

“I like my Glock G-19.”

“That’s why you have one, because it’s what you wanted. However to get you enough power, we went with the Gold Dot 124gr +P ammo.”

“So, back to my question, you would do whatever it takes?”

“You’re just paraphrasing my response; but yes, only as far as is necessary.”

“Why do you have long range rifles then?”

“Which one are you referring to?”

“That .308.”

“That is sort of a medium range rifle; my long range rifle is the model 99. Barrett claims that it’s their most accurate rifle. My M1A has an effective range of 460 meters (500 yards) with iron sights and 800 meters with a scope. The Barrett probably is right up there with the Accuracy International and McMillan rifles. I’ve only shot it as far as 1,500 meters. Wiki says that the model 95 has a range of 1,800 meters but doesn’t give a range for the model 99.”

“It may sound silly, but why would you need a rifle that is accurate to almost 2,000 yards? It’s not a hunting rifle by any means.”

“That, my dear, would depend on what you were hunting.”

“Why the fancy scope?”

“Because a person can’t see a target at the range a rifle will reach? The BORS determines the range and that Schmidt-Bender 5-25x56 PM III is a high quality scope. I have the Leupold Mark IV 8.5-20x56 ER/T on the Super March along with an ACOG I can switch to for Close Quarters. Range considerations also explain why the scopes are sighted in with Match ammo. My Super Match works fine with surplus ammo when I’m using the 3X ACOG. It also has the built-in Bullet Drop Compensator.”

“Was that as expensive as everything else?”

“Just about. You get what you pay for; I’ve told you that before. I don’t buy the run of the mill surplus ammo either; it’s M118LR, the military sniper ammo.”

Yes, I had only quality firearms. My 12-gauge was a Benelli M4 Super 90 Combat Shotgun aka M-1014. My primary handgun was the Custom TLE II (LG), with laser grip sights and my backup handgun was also a Kimber, the subcompact Ultra Aegis II in 9mm. I wanted my firearms to work the first time, every time, without a hiccup. Generally that meant starting with a quality firearm and letting my gunsmith work on anything presenting a problem, like polishing the feed ramp and trigger work, etc. The better the firearm, the less work needed.

For hunting, I had a post '64 Winchester model 70 in .30-06, a Remington 870, and a Winchester 9422. Was that all I had? No, I had some off the books NFA weapons, too. Some were basically homemade and others purchased. One example was the M16A3 lower topped by a Bushmaster upper with the gas piston modification. We had two of those. Another was a pair Ruger SS Mark IIs with the integral suppressors. I had a Surefire suppressor for my Super Match and an Elite Iron for the model 99. Both modified M16s sported Surefire suppressors.

I know, it seems like a lot, doesn't it? Money was never my problem, our problem. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth; it was probably gold or platinum. It was what they call 'old money', dating back to my great grandfather. My grandfather had quadrupled it and my father had quadrupled it again. I had it carefully invested in nothing but the finest investments.

I'd met my wife Janice while we were attending Brown University. My name is Seth Daniel Adams IV. When we met, her name was Janice Sarah Jenkins and we were both majoring in History. Jan was Valedictorian of her High School class. I was only in the top 5% of my graduating class from a private prep school, but my SAT score was around 1,400 and there was all that old money.

We both got Master's degrees in History and went looking for teaching jobs in any city where we could both work for the same school system. I'd never been out to the Wild West before so St. Louis was an experience for both of us. We'd married the Saturday after graduation with our Masters'. We'd used a placement service and it found the jobs open in St. Louis. We flew out, were interviewed and both hired.

Next, we asked around and decided that we might like to live a little south along I-55 and found a location we liked in a small community named Barnhart, population circa 6,000. A realtor listened to our description of what we wanted to do and directed us to a 40-acre piece of land not that far from the interstate access. We paid the asking price and began to plan our home.

"Since we're here in the Wild West how about a log cabin?"

"Complete with outhouse?"

"No. I've seen some of the homes they build these days that look like log cabins but are basically conventional homes inside, complete with plumbing and a full basement."

"If that's what you want Jan, we'll go looking."

"That's not necessary, I found a builder with a floor plan I like. It's Jim Barna Log and Timber Homes and the floor plan I like is The Livingston with 2,043ft², 3 large bedrooms and 2½ baths."

When we talked to the builder, he had a few questions about what we wanted for a basement. I said something like, "what's to know, a full basement." He came back pointing out that we weren't really that far from St. Louis which was almost certain to be a target if we ever had WW III. So, we asked about suggestions. He had several including a regular basement with a separate 'storm' shelter, a deeper basement with a reinforced overhead and so forth. He suggested a separate shelter built under a log cabin style 4-stall garage. He would do it as a turnkey project, if we chose, excluding supplies but including everything else for 6 people. I'd never given any thought to having a 'storm shelter' and asked him to elaborate.

"We get the occasional tornado in this part of the country, that's reason enough to have a storm shelter. These days, there are more and more people getting into preparedness so come what may, they're ready. I kind of got into it myself back before Y2K. Y2K was a non-event, but we kept at it and my family and I could go for two years on what we have stored and put back."

"How big of a garage?"

I'd recommend 30' deep by 60' long with a separate door on each of the 5 stalls. Make the shelter the same dimension. Put in a separate space for a generator and a very large diesel fuel tank, 40,000-gallon if you can afford it."

"Money isn't really an issue."

"Well then, you'd better put in a 10,000-gallon gasoline tank and a 30,000-gallon propane tank. The tanks may be expensive, but the fuel you put in them costs more than the tanks."

"You said turnkey, but no supplies. Why no supplies?"

"Different people have different tastes. I can do it but I couldn't be sure you'd like what we'd like."

"I have a few more questions. What about communications?"

"I'd recommend an antenna tower with beam on a rotor and vertical antennas. Mid price range radios, I prefer Kenwood. Plus you'll want Citizens Band and Business Band radios, preferably VHF."

"What about self-defense?"

"Do you have any firearms?"

"I have 3, a post '64 Winchester model 70 in .30-06, a Remington 870 12-gauge, and a Winchester 9422."

“That’s all?”

“Yes. What else would I need?”

“How much money do you really have?”

“Enough.”

“I wasn’t asking for a figure. Enough will get you up to speed. You’re going to need some military style firearms, probably 7.62×51mm, 5.56×45mm, 9mm, .45acp and if it wouldn’t present a problem, maybe a .50BMG rifle. I happen to prefer suppressors on my military arms and they can be had, for a price, although they’re illegal in Missouri. I also know a very good gunsmith who can do anything needed to convert a firearm from a shooting weapon to a piece of art. I know another guy who, if the price is right, can get all the NFA you’d want.”

“NFA?”

“National Firearms Act. It covers machine guns, sawed off shotguns and silencers among other things.”

“Can you help me in that department? I don’t know much about military firearms.”

“I can make suggestions, but you’ll have to choose for yourself.”

“Ok, how about when you build the shelter and the basement, you put a 25ft³ freezer in each? Finish off half of the basement as a recreation room and leave the other half unfinished for storage.”

“Shelving?”

“Yeah, let’s do that, say shelving covering about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the floor space.”

“I was thinking of one of those 4 in one kitchen centers for the shelter, will that do?”

“What’s in it?”

“Electric stove, oven, sink and refrigerator or a microwave.”

“Let’s do the microwave and put in a standalone refrigerator only.”

“Ok, I can get the freezers and refrigerators at Sears. Same refrigerator in the house? I get a contractors discount.”

“Go for it.”

“The way it will work is, you cover my cost on the appliances and pay the installation charge as part of the turnkey price.”

“Fine, whatever. How soon can you get this done?”

“How fast do you need it done?”

“Like yesterday.”

“Can’t do that. Two months ok?”

“Yeah, we’ll get a furnished apartment. Now, back to this gun deal, what can you do to help me there?”

“Like I said, make suggestions. Help you get as good a price as possible. Go through the guy I know for the unapproved firearms.”

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It took them 61 days, start to finish. I’d given him 50% down with 40% due at completion and the final 10% due within 30 days. The shelter access was beside the garage; a long stair with a blast door on the left at the bottom. There was a separate concrete block structure holding the Kohler generator connected to the shelter with an oval shaped concrete pipe. The power came underground from the road and went first to the generator room where the ATS was mounted. From there, it went to the fuse panel at the home.

Both the cabin and the shelter sported gun safes. My old guns went into the gun safe in the Master bedroom and my new guns into the gun safe in the shelter. All of the weapons beyond my original firearms I described earlier were acquired during this period along with the supplies of ammunition. When we moved into our new home, Jan was pregnant with Trudy.

The NFA dealer seemed to be a shady character; he didn’t want to know names or anything. His only interest was his friend Ben Franklin or gold at the current spot price. John had helped me get the Super Match with the Leupold Mark IV, the Barrett 99 with the Schmidt and Bender, 2 Raptor 6X night scopes, the Kimbers, the Glock and the shady guy supplied the full auto lowers with John assembling the M16s.

We’d purchased dried firewood for the fireplace and it was stacked on the concrete cover of the stairwell to the shelter. At John’s suggestion, I purchased two Stihl chainsaws and a hydraulic splitter. He next suggested erecting a barn. A company name Castlebrook Barns assembled very good barns and would built to suit. We could have two feeder cattle, some feeder pigs, chickens and so forth.

The forty acres was fenced and a new section of fence had been erected to exclude the buildings. The old fencing across the front of the building area was left in place and a remotely controlled gate added. Other improvements had been added during the three years we'd lived here. First, we added 30kw of PV panels, charge controller and inverters. Next, we backed the PV up with a wind turbine rated at 30kw. We also installed two 48 volt submarine battery banks in the basement.

We took shooting instruction and became familiar with each of our firearms. The instruction for the CCWs had to wait until we'd been residents for 6 months. We were no longer that naïve couple who had moved to Missouri from Rhode Island. We had let John select our initial supplies and had over the course of the 3 years tried them all out. While we liked some better than others, there wasn't anything we didn't like. The opened cans were finished off and replaced with identical supplies.

We also began to shop Costco and Sam's Club to fill all those shelves in the basement. It was cool enough to store everything and not affect the shelf life. We found that butchering a whole beef and 2 hogs gave us too much beef and insufficient pork. To compensate for that, we bought boneless pork loins, bacon and Cure 81 hams, some from Costco and some from Sam's. Butchering beef became an every other year exercise and we still butchered 2 hogs and added to them.

We bought hay and grain for our 2 Morgan geldings. They got new saddles, bridles, saddlebags, scabbards, pommel bags and lariats. Although we had the barn, it was more empty than not. What we didn't buy were chickens, electing instead to order a full case from a grocery store each year and wrapping them. We did the same with small Butterball turkeys, buying the smallest they had.

It was around the time that we bought the horses with the assorted tack that we got into Single Action Shooting. We didn't really get fully involved, stopping after acquiring the firearms and ammunition. We had an assortment of loads, both Cowboy and full power and, as with our other ammo, we had them in quantity.

John didn't buy radiation equipment from Radmeters4U, electing instead to buy everything from Arrow Tech. He had selected an AMP 50, an AMP 100 and an AMP 200, 6 model AT-138 and 6 model AT-742 dosimeters, plus an AT-750-5 charger. He did buy the KIO₃ from Medical Corps, 12 bottles. He could have gotten it at Frugal's, too.

The shelter was also well equipped with medical supplies including OTC drugs and prescription drugs in the sealed manufacturers' containers. There were two types of haemostatic bandages, stretch gauze, non-stretch gauze and both adhering and non-adhering gauze pads and tape. He recommended we take a civilian version of the Combat Lifesaver program and if we did, he'd add to our medical supplies with something to bulk up blood in a true emergency.

The prescription drugs included 2mg ampoules of Dilaudid, Mark I NAAK (Nerve Agent Antidote Kit) and prefilled syringes of diazepam, one for each three Mark Is. He pointed

out that if the sensing strips didn't indicate a nerve agent, taking the Mark I kit would be fatal. His explanation of the chemical sensing kit was as follows:

The M256A1 Chemical Agent Detector Kit is a compact, simple-to-use kit designed to detect blister, nerve and blood (cyanide) agents. It also determines the type of agent present or confirms the absence of a hazardous concentration of agent. It is used after a suspected chemical attack to confirm the event and then later to determine if it is safe to unmask or reduce the protective posture level. This is one of the military's most sensitive devices for detecting Chemical Agents and detects all agents at levels below those that can kill or injure people. It was used extensively during the 1st Gulf War and is widely deployed with our troops in Iraq today.

The kit consists of:

- A plastic carry case with Velcro closure*
- A booklet of M-8 test paper sealed in a plastic bag*
- Attached instruction cards*
- 12 sampler-detector pouches, each consisting of eight glass ampoules (each filled with chemical reagent), three test spots, a chemical heater, protective strips, and tabs.*

You would use the sampler detectors to test for chemical agents in the vapor form. The M-8 paper is used to check for chemical agents in the liquid form.

The test consists of: -Activating the sampler by breaking the integral crushable ampoules and releasing test reagents -Exposing the activated test disc to ambient air - Comparing the observed color change to the color chart in the instructions, thereby determining the presence or absence of chemical agents.

As its name implies, the M256A1 vapor-sampler is used to test vapors for the presence of nerve agents, blood agents, and blister agents. It is the primary testing device in the M256A1 kit. When issued, each new M256A1 kit contains 12 of these miniature chemistry sets, each sealed in a plastic laminated foil envelope. To minimize the chance of error, two persons should conduct a vapor-sampler test; one person reads the instructions and the second person performs the action. When necessary, one person can successfully operate the vapor-sampler. Vapor-samplers are used once and discarded.

"Do you really think a gas attack is likely?"

"No, but, the Sarin attack on the Tokyo subway, usually referred to in the Japanese media as the Subway Sarin Incident, was an act of domestic terrorism perpetrated by members of Aum Shinrikyo on March 20, 1995.

"In five coordinated attacks, the perpetrators released sarin on several lines of the Tokyo Metro, killing a dozen people, severely injuring fifty and causing temporary vision problems for nearly a thousand others. The attack was directed against trains passing through Kasumigaseki and Nagataschō, home to the Japanese government. This was

(and remains, as of 2009) the most serious attack to occur in Japan since the end of World War II.

“They actually began their attacks on June 27, 1994. With the help of a converted refrigerator truck, members of the cult released a cloud of sarin which floated near the homes of judges who were overseeing a lawsuit concerning a real-estate dispute which was predicted to go against the cult. From this one event, 500 people were injured and seven people died.”

“But...”

“And, don’t forget the anthrax attacks that occurred over the course of several weeks beginning on September 18, 2001. Letters containing anthrax spores were mailed to several news media offices and two Democratic US Senators, killing five people and infecting 17 others. The primary suspect was not publicly identified until 2008.”

Anthrax is a gram positive bacillus and may be treated with Penicillin G, Ciprofloxacin or Doxycycline. If the patient is allergic to those, you may want to use Erythromycin or Chloramphenicol. I checked our drug supplies in the shelter and found Cipro, Doxy and Erythro. John had given me a document file that indicated which drug for which disease. That only went so far, we’re History teachers, not doctors.

So, how far would I go? As far as it takes. I thought that up to this point in our marriage, I done rather well by my family. We were protected against most natural disasters and most manmade disasters. We had food, water, fuel, shelter, medicine, self-defense and both drove 2008 Suburban’s with the motors replaced with the Cummins 6BT engine, non-electronic. Both vehicles were fully equipped with hitches, winches, pioneer tools, extra spare tires and long range fuel tanks.

Let me fill in a few more blanks. We now have two children, Trudy 3 and Sarah 1. I wanted a son and we agreed to try one more time and give up if we had another daughter.

Admittedly, I didn’t buy gold for \$270 an ounce, but I got in under \$400. And we put some of that old money to a new use, guarding the inside of our safe in the shelter. There were 1,000 ounces each 0.10, 0.25, 0.50 and 1.0 ounce coins. There was also \$3,000 face value each of 90% silver dimes, quarters and halves plus 4,000 Silver Eagles. Isn’t it nice to have enough money to do what you really want to do?

Old money is defined as *the inherited wealth of established upper-class families or a person, family, or lineage possessing inherited wealth*. The term is typically used to describe families that have been wealthy for multiple generations. Locations such as Greenwich, CT, Westchester County, NY, and Philadelphia's Main Line are often associated with old money. Think Rockefeller, DuPont, Vanderbilt or Rothschild.

My great grandfather was Nouveau riche. My grandfather still worked and was probably A Parvenu. My father had old money but he worked because he wanted to, not because he had to. The same applied to me; I inherited a substantial amount of money from my grandfather in that generation skipping scheme to beat estate tax. Dad never told me if it worked, but I had a very comfortable 8 figures tucked away. In turn, much of what Jan and I earned was put back into the same investments where it came from when we drew on it for our 40 Acres and a Mule.

Well, not mules exactly, but you get the idea. With each child we had, we added another gelding and tack on their third birthday. The geldings were mere colts or fillies and would be ready to ride when the children were old enough, say 6. It was a full out set including the .45-70 and .45 Colt. Plus every time we went shooting, I replaced what we shot up with new ammo. And, too, with each additional firearm came the acquisition of a 'standard loadout' of ammo. We acquired Bushmaster semi-auto A3 rifles with the conversion and Browning Hi-Power pistols.

The thing I liked about Bushmaster was that if you wanted something specific, like an A3 upper with a 20" barrel and the gas piston conversion installed plus a spare parts kit, you had your dealer call them and you had it in no time. The AR-15/M-16 with a barrel less than 20" long lost too much velocity, IMHO, and wasn't worth having. The one saving grace the original rifle had was the barrel length that yielded a velocity of circa 3,200fp/s (975 m/s).

For someone who learned everything he knew about military firearms during the past four years, I was a quick study. Considering the amount of money we had invested in firearms and ammo, we couldn't let them sit around and collect dust. It would be a real wakeup call if one morning we woke up in the shelter with a group of firearms we didn't know how to use. So we learned. St. Louis isn't a bad city by any means, but it does have gang problems like any city of its size.

Put it like this: Every day somebody bustin', somebody shootin', somebody gettin' locked up, somebody done got killed. –St. Louis gang member

Any way you try to explain it, St. Louis is one of the most violent cities in America. A primary cause for that distinction is gang violence. We got our CCWs as fast as the law allowed. I had to leave mine in the Suburban, she had that Galco purse. I always assumed it would be my luck that she was off on maternity leave when some kid decided to drop a cap on someone in the hallway outside my room.

Off course that hadn't happened in our school. Speaking of which, the first day when we started, the kids were really confused having two new History teachers both named Adams who turned out to be husband and wife. Had it been up to the students, I'm sure she'd have had all the boys in her class and I'd have ended up with the girls. Better call them what they're supposed to be, young men and young women. Have you ever seen *To Sir With Love*? Like that only worse. *Welcome Back, Kotter*? Twenty times worse. Just a good thing we didn't have a heating stove in the classroom.

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 1

“I’m pregnant. If you want, I can get an ultrasound.”

“Not unless there’s a medical reason, we’ll get what we get.”

“I was hoping you would say that.”

“Have I ever given you a reason to believe otherwise?”

“I guess not. But you want a boy so badly.”

“As long as we have a healthy baby, I’ll be pleased.”

“What would you feel about my not returning to teaching after my maternity leave?”

“It’s not like we need the money, now is it?”

“Just how rich are you?”

“When we got married, I had a comfortable 8 figures. Let’s just say that we’re more comfortable now. When Dad and Mom pass, we’ll be getting close to 9 figures.”

“No Seth, really, how comfortable?”

“Last I looked it was just short of 40. Do you want me to diversify some more?”

“In what?”

“Precious metals come to mind, more gold and silver. It’s around \$700 right now and I think that regardless of who wins a year from November, it’s going to go higher. Both Hillary and this Obama seem to have a chance.”

“Who do you like?”

“Hard to say, McCain is a war hero, I don’t care for the Clintons and I’m not sure about Romney or Huckabee.”

“You’re thinking Republican?”

“I am but you should vote your conscience. Last good Republican we had in the White House was Reagan. Bush senior cut his throat with that read my lips remark. Bush junior should have stayed out of Iraq. Afghanistan I can understand up to a point although I would have limited it to an air war. Bomb them back to the Stone Age and leave.”

“Why would you suggest that?”

“Our experience in Vietnam, taught us that lesson. The Soviet Union didn’t learn and invaded Afghanistan. The initial Soviet deployment of the 40th Army in Afghanistan began on December 24, 1979. The final troop withdrawal began on May 15, 1988, and ended on February 15, 1989. Due to the interminable nature of the war, the conflict in Afghanistan has often been referred to as the Soviet’s Vietnam. We ignored both our own experience and their experience when we went looking for bin Laden. We’ve had boots on the ground for about 7 years and haven’t accomplished much. We’ve been in Iraq about 5 years with nearly the same result.”

“I see your point. Anyway, what about my stopping teaching?”

“If that’s what you want, you have my full support. I’ll contact my broker and have him move ten million into precious metals. We’re going to need a bigger safe. I’ll talk to John and see if we can build a vault and install a vault door.”

“Good idea Seth, our daughters aren’t old enough to be playing with firearms.”

“I’m going to wait until this baby is born to decide which weapons I want to get. I think a M1911 and a Springfield Armory if it’s a boy otherwise the Browning Hi-Power and a Bushmaster.”

“You haven’t gotten me a shotgun or any of our children.”

“I haven’t, have I? That easy to remedy, four Mossberg 590A1s coming right up.”

“Why not what you have?”

“Which one, I have the Benelli M4 Super 90 Combat Shotgun and the Remington 870.”

“The Benelli.”

“Five of them? They’re fairly expensive. The 590A1 would be a better choice. In fact, I may get one for myself. We’ll keep the Benelli and 870 as backup weapons. I can use the difference to buy a backup M1A.”

“Oh no you don’t, you have one and it cost more than a used car.”

“I was thinking about the Loaded with the 3X ACOGs and scopes. It would give everyone more choices. I’d better add 5 more M1911s. We’ll need extra magazines for the rifles and pistols. And ammo of course. As far as you not returning to work, it’s fine with me. Maybe we can have a garden and I can help with the canning.”

“We’ve had Lucy coming in to babysit since Trudy came along. Do you think we could continue that for a while?”

“There’s no reason not to, that’s up to you.”

Lucy Morris was a widow from Barnhart whose children were grown, married and moved away from home. One lived in Chicago and the other in Denver. Between what we paid her (in cash) and what she received from Social Security, she made a living. She was like a grandmother to the girls. Lucy knew about the shelter because we showed it to her. The key to the padlock, for the large steel door covering a portion of the stairway, was on our keyboard in the kitchen.

One of the ways people accumulate money is by not spending it. We had spent a fair amount getting to where we were and it would take some time to get back to our previous financial status. We kept enough in the bank to cover our bills and a little each month went into the gold safe.

I talked to John about what I wanted to do and he suggested a concrete block storage room with a vault door from any of several companies. With school starting in a week, I told him to go ahead and do it. I preferred a combination lock instead of an electronic keypad. Two weeks later, the floor and footing were poured, the block erected and the door installed. He offered to build rifle racks and move the safe into the vault. I warned him the safe was heavy.

Two days later, he came by and gave me the combination to the vault and we inspected it. It was a good setup, a room about 10’ square with the outward (into the shelter) opening door with 2 rifle racks which could contain 24 rifles/shotguns each and a set of covered shelves for pistols. All of our ammo from the shelter was now in the vault. I told him it was great and he handed me an invoice. I wrote a check on our money market account to pay his bill.

I could write a maximum of 3 checks per month before they charged a fee. As of late, I’d been putting our money into that account. After he left I called the dealer and told him I was ready for delivery of our additional gold and silver. He told me they’d be here in about 3 hours and confirmed the bank wire transferring the funds. They would unload it at any spot I designated, but it would be up to me to haul it to where I wanted it. I’d added another \$7,000 face value of 90% silver dimes, quarters and halves and the remainder of the 10 million went into gold, 25% in each of the four sizes and 1,000 silver Eagles. No, you can’t have my address!

“Are you sure about this, it’s a lot of metal.”

“No worries, I have a very secure location to store it.”

“You’d need a vault.”

“I have a vault. At the moment, it’s looking awfully empty. I have room for this and maybe some more if the price comes back down.”

“Better thee than me. What’s that make, a total of \$10,000 face value each in silver coins of the three denominations?”

“Plus I have 5,000 silver Eagles, and 1000 ounces each of the tenth, quarter, half and full ounce gold Eagles not counting this delivery. Thank you.”

“No, thank you. I think the wife and I might take a cruise this winter.”

I don’t know if they ever took the cruise, I never talked to him again. After he left, I unlocked the steel cover to the stairs, grabbed two bags of coins and went down to the open blast door. It was standing open and I put the bags in the cabinets and went back for more. Both cabinets were close to full by the time I finished.

“The gold and silver is locked up. I put the combination inside the radio cabinet. There for a while, it seemed like I’d never get done. What’s for dinner?”

“I made a casserole, tuna and noodles with peas, and have a loaf of French bread.”

“How long do I have?”

“I just put it in, about 20 minutes.”

“I’m going to go get a shower. Don’t wait on me; I’m going to use the shower head for a massage.”

“We need to talk when you get back.”

“Anything serious?”

“Not at all, just some simple questions.”

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I finished up, dressed and went down to the dining room.

“Smells good. You said you had a few questions?”

“Yes, how much gold and silver is in the shelter?”

“About ¼ of our assets. This purchase was for ten million. He made enough off the transaction that he’s thinking about taking his wife on a cruise this winter.”

“Altogether?”

“1,000 ounces of gold in each of the four denominations, 1,000 ounces of silver plus 7,000 face of dimes, quarters and halves.”

“Maybe you should think about not renewing your teaching contract next year and stay home.”

“I could I suppose, but I’d probably end up bored to death.”

“Since you agreed to keep Lucy, We could plant a large garden next year. We could also get a Unimog with all of the different attachments.”

“And I suppose you’ve checked out the Unimog?”

“It just so happens, I have. They’re not cheap; however you get the most bang for the buck.”

“Where did you hear about the Unimog?”

“Probably the same place you did, Frugal’s. That story, *Percy’s Mission* specifically.”

“Have we created monsters?”

“I can’t speak for you Seth. I don’t feel like a monster. What I do feel is prepared for come what may.”

“I’ll contact John about a log structure to hold the truck and implements. Then, I’ll contact Freightliner and place an order. Are we still on to take our General class test on Saturday?”

“Yes we are.”

“Think we ought to make the log structure large enough to hold more wood?”

“It probably wouldn’t be the best use of our money, but we’ll see. Need space to store canning jars too. Why don’t you go online to Canning Pantry and order 50 cases each of regular mouth quarts and pints plus wide mouth quarts and pints. Better get jelly jars, pectin, and spices to make pickles and tomato sauces. They sell spare lids by the case so get two additional seasons worth of lids. Then go to Lehman’s and order a Diamant 525 with a full set of replacement parts. Check their website out; they carry a full line of pioneer type equipment. Oh, the pressure canner. We should get two and they should be either the 30 quart or the 41.5 quart All American.”

“What kind of pioneer equipment?”

“Hand powered. And, another thing since we’re considering worst case scenarios, we should run water to the new building and install a wood burning stove. How is our inventory of LTS food and our regular food?”

“Thirty months for six on the LTS. We have one year for six on the current foods, including baby foods. When junior here joins us, we’ll increase the supply of baby foods.”

“On second thought, get that ultrasound so I’ll know which set of firearms to buy for him or her.”

“I was right, we’ve created monsters.”

“Do you have your list?”

“It’s all written down. I made a separate list for you.”

“One more thing, western clothing.”

“What about western clothing?”

“We should both get a full set including underwear, socks, jeans, shirts, boots, rain slicker and lined drover coat. I think most of it in our current sizes with a bit extra one size smaller and more one size larger. Straw hats for the summer and felt hats for the winter.”

“Aren’t you going overboard?”

“You don’t like western cut clothing?”

“I don’t know, I’ve never had any. Aren’t those cowboy boots hard to walk in?”

“A little but we can get the riding heels and the roper heels for walking.”

“As much as I hate to repeat myself, how do you know this?”

“Isn’t the information highway a thing of wonder?”

“You’ve been shopping?”

“Yes sir. I’m think Wrangler brand jeans and shirts; and either Stetson or Resistol hats. Maybe Justin boots.”

“When?”

“Can we get Lucy to watch the kids tomorrow?”

“It’s Saturday, but I can ask.”

Lucy took the kids and before we left, all of the things we wanted from Canning Pantry and Lehman's had been ordered. I had called John and he said he'd come by the next day to discuss a large log storage building.

Shopping for western clothing was fun. We had quite the assortment including clothing from Australia, the US and some probably made in China. We ended up with Resistol hats, but only because we liked the style better than the Stetson's they had in stock.

The next day, John pulled in around 1:00. I explained what we had in mind, a large storage shed with room to store a Unimog with several attachments, more than 200 cases of Mason jars and extra lids, a wood burning stove and a 50-gallon propane hot water heater. Plus room to store 50 cords of firewood. He asked if I wanted to approve the plans or should he just get it designed and installed. I told him, I just didn't have the time and he should get it in ASAP. I also wrote a check on our money market account for half of his estimated price.

The storage building went in quickly and included a ½ bath, the wood stove, counter-tops and much more. The Canning Pantry and Lehman's orders came in faster than I anticipated and I covered them with plastic in case of rain. I noticed about halfway through the construction of the storage building, that a second area was being graded.

"Are we putting in something else?"

"Yes we are; a greenhouse from a company in Texas. I got the web address from one of Tired Old Man's stories and checked it out. It's their 30'x60' Classic. If we do have some kind of event, it may be our last best hope. I talked to John about getting it erected and he had a crew with some down time. I hope you don't mind."

"Better to do it now than after something happens."

"I saw the doctor today."

"Is there a problem?"

"Not at all. Go ahead and buy the M1A and the M1911."

"A boy? Hot damn. Okay if we name him Seth Daniel Adams V?"

"I figured on that."

"I'll stop by the gun dealer after work on Monday and get everything lined up. I've changed my mind on the Loaded and will get him firearms that match mine."

"I half expected that. While you're at it, would you get 3 of the Kimber subcompact Ultra Aegis IIs for the girls and me?"

“I’ll order all of the ammo when I’m in the store.”

“So, when does the Second American Revolution begin?”

“Best guess, sometime after January 20, 2009. McCain and Palin can’t hope to win so I guess we’re going to have our first black President.”

“But he’s so inexperienced.”

“He’ll just have to get OJT. One thing more, I’m not going to renew my teaching contract for next year. I’ll be late the next two nights. Tomorrow night at the gun store and the following night at Freightliner.”

I had school tomorrow and made sure when I left that I had the checkbooks for our bank account and our money market account. I bought everything I wanted at the gun store and what wasn’t in stock would be in within 10 days. It went faster than I thought and I had time to check with Freightliner about the Unimog. The one they had in stock had low walls on the box and they had only half of the implements I wanted. They had to order the snow blower, mower and rototiller. They had a crane in stock to go with it and I bought that, just in case. They also had a cherry picker which got me to thinking about apple trees and I bought it too.

“Will you be this late tomorrow?”

“Hit both places tonight. What I didn’t bring home from the gun store will be here in 10 days. I bought the Unimog with the low sided box, a crane and a cherry picker. The rototiller, snow blower and mower are on order. Everything is paid for.”

“Why the cherry picker?”

“It got me to thinking about apples and in turn planting an orchard. Tomorrow after school I’ll stop by a nursery and get the low down on fruit and nut trees.”

“If they’ll grow here, I’d like a pecan, an almond and an English Walnut. Might be nice to have some apples and cherries, but I don’t know if they grow here either.”

“I think they do, we’re not much further north than Washington DC.”

“I think those are ornamental cherry trees. The nursery should know what we can grow here. I suppose citrus is out?”

“I suppose for the most part, but I’ll ask.”

o

“Great news. We can grow any of about 18 varieties of apple, 9 of pears, 6 of peaches, 3 of the nectarines, 9 kinds of plums, 2 kinds of cherries both sour, 3 kinds of strawberries that include 10 cultivars of the June bearing, 1 of the everbearing and 2 of the dayneutral. Twelve different kinds of grapes, 2 kinds of early red raspberries, 4 of the late red, 8 of the black, 4 different thornless black, 10 different high bush blueberries. Nut trees include chestnuts, hickory, pecan, black walnut and English walnut, but apparently almonds don’t do well. I wasn’t thinking of that large of an orchard. I told him you’d come in to see him and choose what you wanted and he’ll arrange transplanting. He’ll groom them as needed for a fee.”

“What’s that all mean?”

“It means we can grow fruit. I didn’t think to ask how long before they began bearing, but you can ask before you make your selections.”

“Guess we’ll need more jelly jars.”

“You can put up some of the fruit for pies, like the apples, pears and cherries.”

“You’ve come far pilgrim.”

“Feels like far.”

“Were it worth the trouble?”

“What trouble?”

“Robert Redford and Will Geer.”

“Right, which movie?”

“Uh, *Man in the Wilderness?*”

“Un, uh *Jeremiah Johnson.*”

“That’s right the other movie had John Houston and Richard Harris. There was another good one, *A Man Called Horse*. We have all of them on DVD in the shelter.”

“Is that how you see our efforts, trying to get established in a wilderness?”

“Do you?”

“Not at all. You have to admit that there must be some things you miss about home.”

“I’ll let you know if I think of one. At least we don’t have to deal with black tie and white tie events any longer.”

o

For the benefit of those who don't know, white tie is the highest order of dress, distinguished by the white bow tie and silk facing on the jacket with tails and considered 'formal'. Black tie is a black bow tie with a tuxedo and considered 'semi-formal'. I half expect that sometime in the near future, that will become moot.

While it may appear that our wealthy couple, has covered all bases, only time will tell.

o

Seth Daniel Adams V was born on Christmas Eve, 2008. Jan elected to stay one more day for a belly button, her choice. Once she came home, Lucy cared for the three and Jan limited her activity to nursing Seth. Lucy and she turned to the greenhouse which was also plumbed with water, had adjustable vents and grow lights. While I was concerned about getting power to the lights, it probably wouldn't be a problem due to the PV panels on both the barn and the storage building. John had installed overhead propane heaters in the greenhouse and the storage building.

I began to notice an increase in our propane consumption and asked if we could increase our storage capacity to double what we had. He suggested it was overkill but provided a crew, for a fee, to install the new tank and connect the two tanks together. He had three idle crews at the moment and that postponed laying one off.

"Still teaching in St. Louis?"

"I'm not renewing my contract. With what we have put back, we don't have to work and with the shape the country is in, I'd prefer to not stray too far from home."

"You have BOBs in both your vehicles don't you?"

"Bob who?"

"It's an acronym; want me to work up one for each vehicle?"

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 2

“Make it 3, I’m going to use our boat to cruise the Mississippi.”

“Cost plus 10% fair?”

“Gee, will I need a bank loan?”

“Not exactly. I can give you three choices, something basic, something mid-range or a full out trauma kit that includes a pulse oximeter and a 415 liter oxygen tank. It will provide oxygen for 46 minutes at 6 liters. We can also go with a 682 which would give you almost two hours.”

“Might as go all out.”

“Did you ever fill those empty garage spaces?”

“The boat is in one and I haven’t decided what to do with the other.”

The missus asked me to erect your greenhouse. Not something we usually do, but it gave my guys a few days more work.”

“How are you coming on your preps?”

“We’re doing it in stages. Shelter, blast door and air system are installed. Think we might look for beds at Goodwill. Generator is a Kohler 30REOZJB, good used, less than 500 hours on the meter.”

“It seems to me, you’d build the walls plus beds with 4x4 corners supporting something like 2x8s or 2x10s. Got a bathroom?”

“Sorta. Composting toilet, sink with a small water heater and same 4 in one you have. I’ve kept out three firearms, the .308, 12-gauge and my .45. Have a small grey water tank that pumps up to the sewer line. Should have built in the country like you did.”

“Water tank?”

“Same size as the grey water tank, 2,000.”

“So, your biggest problem is location?”

“Right, we could survive the attack, but it’s iffy whether or not we could hold out long enough.”

“We couldn’t put up many, but there’d be room for you and your family. We have enough LTS food for 6 people for 30 months with more coming and a full year supply of our normal diet in the basement storage room.”

“How many have you made the offer to?”

“Only one person besides my immediate family; Lucy, the woman who cares for the kids. There are two empty bunks in the bunkroom and the other unused bedroom.”

“Have any cots?”

“How many kids do you have?”

“Three.”

“I can add a twin bed to the bunkroom for Lucy. Would that work?”

“It would. Do you think we’d get enough notice of a pending attack to actually make it down here?”

“I don’t know, but you could bug out as soon as the radiation dropped. You’d be below one Rad per hour in about 30 days. That would let you suit up, grab your firearms and head for here. Even if it took you two hours down, you’d only pick up like 2 Rem.”

“You know, maybe we ought to move all but a six week supply of our LTS stuff down here. Would you mind?”

“Not at all. We’d be a prime target for thieves, believe me.”

“That gun safe that weighed so much?”

“That and the armory we’ve built over the years.”

“You bought more?”

“Every time we had a baby, we added firearms and ammunition. We found out that this baby is a boy and he will have exactly the same as I have. I forgot to tell you, I replaced the Benelli Super 90 with a Mossberg 590A1. The M-1014 and 870 are backup guns. Jan even asked me to get those small 9mm Kimber’s as backups for the girls and her. We’re not short of firearms.”

“Going to be a while before that boy grows into a model 7.62.”

“Yes, but he’ll have one when he’s ready for it. Of all the things I can buy, there are a few that seem to be beyond my reach.”

“For example?”

“That military ammo for the .50BMG rifles, the Mk211MP.”

“What else?”

“If we could get the training, there’d be room in the armory for some rockets.”

“Grenades too?”

“You can get them?”

“I can’t, but you remember that guy who supplied the NFA stuff?”

“That reminds me, I didn’t get suppressors for the girls or Seth’s rifles or the M1911. Would this guy be able to supply those and the other things?”

“He can supply anything you have the money for. Not everyone in the country has scruples.”

“You need cash up front?”

“It would make it go faster.”

“Alright then, will one bundle of Ben Franklins be enough?”

“Do you keep that much cash on hand?”

“More.”

“I’ll bring back the change.”

“How does he get away with it?”

“I suspect he dummies up the requests on Police and Sheriff Department letterheads. What exactly is it you need?”

“Two 5.56, one 7.62 and one .50 caliber suppressor. M-72 rockets if they still make them, and 30 cans of Mk211.”

“Make it two bundles; I don’t know his going price for HEIAP or the rockets. Grenades run five bucks each for all types.”

“Is the stuff hot?”

“Probably the military stuff.”

o

Over a period of time, John and I became as thick as thieves. We went through Jan's and my armory and added suppressors for every firearm except the .22 rifles and shotguns. For most of the pistols, that included a second, threaded barrel. I replenished our cash on hand from our checking account. My pay was directly deposited and our purchases were mostly limited to the light bill, groceries and keeping our tanks topped off. The light bill was all but nonexistent due to our solar panels and wind turbine and frequently was a credit.

Had you asked Jan or me on that day we received our Master's degrees if we could imagine a time like the present, we'd have suggested you see a shrink. None of this was brought to our parents' attention when they flew out to visit. Jan's mother Jill was a homemaker and her father Joseph worked for Xerox. My father Seth and mother Margaret lived in Westchester County as did the Jenkins. She was busy with her social circles and he was an investment counselor, primarily managing his own investments. They were all somewhere on the scale called upper class, ranging from lower upper to middle upper although my father considered them to be upper upper. Not quite, upper upper measures their wealth in billions, not millions.

Before I finished up my last year of teaching, I set about figuring out the new Unimog and assorted accessories. I got the rototiller mounted and made three passes through the area we'd staked off for a garden, double the size we'd originally planned. Jan helped and we strung lines for rows that were 30" apart. She and I finished up the planting in a single day. The previous week, the nursery company delivered and set the plants. The orchard was ringed with brambles, ergo, black and red raspberries. The trees were divided into small sections of like fruit. Jan had some of each of the different fruits, but only one cultivar of each. We also had the nursery plant thorny blackberries all around the inside of the fence enclosing the building area.

John sent plumbers out to run water lines to the orchard and we installed an automatic watering system. Our well had been one of the first projects on the property back in the beginning. Access to the wellhead required lifting a manhole cover and slipping down into the concrete enclosed well head. It was powered by inverted electrical current from batteries kept charged by solar panels. Although it was a little on the expensive side, the buildings were all oriented with a south facing roof and that roof covered by solar panels. We had two boxes of spare panels in the storage building.

Other than the exercise cycle, I can't remember the last time the generator ran. One other thing I should mention. The PRI products were added to the tanks once a year on July first rather than take a chance of all of that expensive fuel going bad.

As far as the additions to our little armory, the first things out of the gate were the Sure-fire suppressors with the Fast Attach adapters. A short time later, the .50 caliber suppressor came in and was installed. That was followed by the new threaded barrels and

Gem Tech suppressors. The final delivery was the most expensive, 4 crates of M-72s, 2 cases each of every kind of hand grenade excluding less than lethal and 30 cans of Mk211. That's where the \$20,000 ran out. John said more of the grenades were available, if I wanted them. I ordered more concussion and fragmentation and counted out 12 of good old Ben, telling him $\frac{1}{3}$ concussion and $\frac{2}{3}$ fragmentation.

John asked about locating a singlewide mobile home on the property and I discussed it with Jan, explaining about my offering them space in our shelter. She said we might as well let them; we didn't really have room in the house. John had a crew down to hook up water, septic and electric. He asked about a separate meter and I suggested that should we actually get a light bill instead of a credit, he pay the bill. I purchased an above ground 3,300-gallon propane tank for the mobile home.

The home was in good condition considering its age which he said was about 30 years. They furnished it with their old furniture and bought new for their home near Oakville. From then on, they usually came down once a month and John and I'd drive over to the river. Although there was about a five year difference in our ages, they being the older, Sally and Jan struck up a great friendship and Sally usually helped Jan can and Lucy watched the kids.

On the subject of livestock, it was agreed to butcher one steer and 4 hogs per year and split the meat. He also got us started on the chickens that we had heretofore avoided. It was a bit different having 'retired' at the age 30. And it was past due my really learning to ride. To this point, when we rode, we walked the Morgans. No more, I was going to learn if it killed me.

o

With the problems in the economy in the latter part of Bush's term and the early part of Obama's term, we sat tight on our blue chips. We might possibly lose a little dividend income but not the value the investments represented. I was almost tempted to buy more gold, but it was too rich for my blood. Instead, we invested a bit locally and began to accumulate cash. Much of that local investment came in the form of livestock. We bought 4 Morgan mares and made a deal for long term stud services. We also bought 2 Angus cows with their calves, one a new born and one a yearling. Finally, we bought 4 feeder pigs and one sow.

I soon learned the process of composting manure. Under USDA organic standards, manure must be subjected to proper thermophilic composting and allowed to reach a sterilizing temperature. If raw animal manure is used, 120 days must pass before the crop is harvested. I just built a 3x3 bin 20 feet long and dumped in the manure, with a little loam on the bottom and top. It would be used the following year on the garden and in the greenhouse. "Not bad for a city boy," I told myself.

We staggered breeding the cows so we usually had one fresh, giving us our milk. From each litter of pigs we brought to market weight, we kept four and sold the rest. We gen-

erally kept four from the second litter so we could have the beef and hogs butchered around the same time.

Senator Ted Kennedy died around the end of August, 2009. Massachusetts had adopted a law when Mitt Romney was Governor requiring a special election to fill vacant congressional seats. That back fired because it meant the Democrats lost their filibuster proof majority in the Senate. Early in 2009, they didn't have it because of that fiasco in Minnesota. Once they got Franken seated, nothing much got done before Kennedy died. The lower and upper chambers were essentially divided down party lines.

When I quit, I opted out of the COBRA and got us a top notch healthcare package covering optical, dental and medical. Other than annual physicals, I didn't use it at all. Jan used it for herself in much the same manner and for the kids, most especially the kids. Trudy would be starting school this coming fall and we had her lined up with a private school. Our children had managed to be spaced out about 18 months apart. Trudy would be 5 before the deadline, Sarah would be close in two years and Seth might have to wait a year. I think some of the private schools are more flexible than others which follow the state guidelines.

Obama was being forced to build our troop strength in Afghanistan as rapidly as he was drawing down Iraq. And, we weren't having any better success than the Russians. Most countries supplying NATO troops to that war wanted to bring their people home. The Healthcare package was totally bogged down in a Congress that didn't appear to be able to get a bill on the President's desk. Every time one of the Congress critters attended a meeting with his/her constituents, they got two ears and 3 bags full.

Jan drew my attention to a story TOM had written where he discussed 4th generation warfare. Any type of insurrection that arose in this country would have the very character of a 4th generation war, complete with US trained insurgents. The US had many trained insurgents; we called them Special Forces and Rangers, SEALs and Special Boat Teams, Force Recon as part of MARSOC and AFSOC.

However, at the moment, the system was working. Not efficiently, but working, about like it always did. My take on our new President was that he was more a man of words than deeds. Of course, the government had been messed up since 9/11/01.

o

My emphasis was more on American History than World History and Jan was the opposite. From the middle of the 20th Century, America had its domestic problems; first, John then Martin and finally Robert. But don't forget the attempt on Ford or the killing of John Lennon and the later shooting of Reagan. I had always thought that violence beget violence. For the most part, these people were men of peace. Terrorists had their day too beginning with Ruby Ridge, the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Waco Siege, followed by the Oklahoma City bombing and September 11th. Note that the term

terrorist is used to describe whoever was in the wrong and included the US Marshal Service, FBI and BATFE.

Besides the domestic violence, we had Vietnam, Operation Urgent Fury (Grenada), Operation Just Cause (Panama), Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and the invasion of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom). Note: United States military operations were conducted under the codename Operation Iraqi Liberation (OIL). The codename was later changed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, due to the unfortunate acronym. The United Kingdom military operation was named Operation Telic.

Since Jan's emphasis was in world history, she paid more attention to world events than I did. I watched events unfolding in our country with a weather eye. One of us should see what was coming well in advance and be able to warn the other. It eventually turned into a dinner time discussion, exchanging the late breaking news. Fortunately, we were each able to lend a bit of unbiased perspective with that news, something MSM failed to do.

o

None of our kids would want for help with their homework although we didn't outright do it for them. We taught them to think and to reason out the solutions, regardless of the subject. For those things that were rote memorization, like the name of continents, we taught them word association, e.g., there is only one continent in the world with south in its name and there is only one continent in the world with north in its name. Europe and Asia were the east west game and everyone knew where they had Rhinos and everyone knew the largest island nation. If the ice in the north was the arctic, then the ice in the south must be the Ant arctic. No they were giant ants; they were penguins or birds that didn't fly. To enforce a lesson, we could always pull up a satellite link and go to Wiki and look at pictures of penguins, or whatever the subject was. One of the few things that really were totally rote memorization was the math tables.

o

"I thought he promised change."

"Some things are harder to change than others. There is a long list of Presidents who promised change, it's one of their favorite campaign promises. About the only one in recent memory that actually succeeded was Ronald Reagan. He got Mr. Gorbachev to tear down the wall.

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall! – Speaking at the Berlin Wall, on June 12, 1987."

"Not bad for an old movie actor who changed political parties."

"If you get one or two in a lifetime, count yourself lucky. Dad says that sometimes and I think he's referring to Truman and Reagan."

"What, he didn't like Ike?"

"As a soldier, he mostly liked him. Ike and Patton were the Majors sent by MacArthur against the Bonus Marchers. I can tell you flat out he didn't care for MacArthur. Patton had a lot of admirers for a foul mouthed SOB. Patton getting killed like that was probably the perfect end to his career. MacArthur was pathetic with that, *Old soldiers never die, they just fade away...* pure grandstanding."

"If we got into another war, who would you like to lead us?"

"A little bit of Colin Powell combined with a little bit of Norman Schwarzkopf. Throw in equal measures of Tommy Franks and David Petraeus and you'd be set."

"You keep your eye on the country. I'm watching Iran and North Korea. North Korea changes its position almost daily while Iran has one goal, acquiring nuclear weapons to use as veiled threat against Israel. I understand from some recent news that their uranium enrichment isn't as productive as they claim."

"So it takes them a while longer; so what?"

"How long can Israel stay on their slightly elevated alert status? What if someone misreads a radar screen? Is NORAD setup to notify Israel if there's a launch in their direction?"

"Let me know if you find out. You need any jars moved or anything?"

"I just have the one full case of green beans. If I pick again tomorrow, you'll have two more cases as soon as they cool."

"Is Lucy helping out?"

"She's been a Godsend. She zips right through the preparation process and makes sure I know what we're doing. She has me keeping notes in a notebook, just in case she says."

"You made it clear that she has a place in our shelter?"

"She said if it ever came to that, she wasn't sure she'd want to live through it. Not that she couldn't, just that she wasn't sure she wanted to."

"Get her to change her mind?"

“Yes, I told her how much we’d need her if something happened. We’d need help with the children and she has a skill set beyond anything we might have. I took her down to the shelter to see how well we were prepared. I also explained all of those things down there that ensured our safety.”

“On a different subject, I did a little research and Mason jars have an average life of 10 uses and the lids can’t be recycled. There an empty hole in the storage building where we could store more jars. I have no proof, but I believe the lids lose their ability to seal by becoming dried out. I’d like to order more jars and lids, if you don’t mind. I also considered getting a large amount of the pickling mixes and storing them in Mylar bags with an oxygen absorber and sealing the pails with Silicone.”

“You’ve been reading information on the Walton Feed website, haven’t you?”

“It’s as good a source as any for information. Although we do have a large amount of LTS foods, I’m beginning to believe you can’t have too many. I think I’d like to add 6 sets of the super pails. And add more bath tissue and coffee to our Costco shopping list.”

“How many bundles of tp and how many cans of coffee?”

“Make it 12 bundles of Charmin (360 rolls) and 96 cans of coffee. Check our supply of bacon and hams and let’s get two cases of butter and freeze it.”

“You didn’t say how much bacon and ham.”

“How about a case of each?”

“I’ll get two cases of each if that’s what you’d actually prefer.”

“Ok, do that instead. See if they have the bulk chickens on sale and if they do, get a cart full. Do we need a box of detergent and dryer sheets for the shelter?”

“Good idea. I got good news and bad news, your choice.”

“Bad news?”

“You’re going shopping with me.”

“Good news?”

“We’ll find everything you want. Since you’re on a buying jag, want to stop by the gun store and check for ammo?”

“Good idea, John didn’t say how much ammo he had and I never got that order of the Black Hills 7.62.”

“What did you order?”

“Two cases of the BTSP and 8 cases of the Match BTHP.”

“Is there room for it in the armory?”

“I’ll manage to squeeze it in.”

“Have you figured out how to let John know if an attack seems imminent?”

“Yeah, either Delta Echo or Alpha Delta Echo with a countersign of Mike Uniform.”

“Which means?”

“Delta Echo for Defense Emergency and Alpha Delta Echo for Air Defense Emergency. Mike Uniform for Message understood. I prefer that they come down at Delta Echo, if possible.”

“And the difference?”

“Both mean missiles in the air. A Defense Emergency is if they targeting our forces overseas and an Air Defense Emergency means the missiles are inbound to the US.”

“What if it is less than one of those?”

“I could be wrong but I figure John or Sally will pick up on it and either make the decision or call and ask for an opinion.”

“I’ve got their phone numbers programmed into my phone, do you?”

“Yes, John is number 2 and Sally is number 3. You, of course are number 1 and my parents are number 4 and your parents number 5.”

“One more question; how long would we have if an Alpha Delta Echo were declared?”

“Somewhere between 20 and 30 minutes. I know, I know, not a lot of time. That’s one of the reasons why we do some things a certain way; because we’d lack the time to do everything.”

“For example?”

“Pulling the radios from the vehicles every evening and putting them in that grounded storage cabinet.”

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 3

“It always irritated me; thanks for explaining. As far as the extra Super Pails, the food won’t go bad. Emergency Essentials or Walton Feed?”

“Let’s go with Emergency Essentials and get rush delivery. If it’s palletized, I can unload it.”

“I didn’t know you had forks for the Unimog.”

“I don’t. I bought a Toolcat 5600 T and it will be delivered tomorrow. We’ll have a bucket, forks and a backhoe.”

“Going to store that in the storage building?”

“Either that or the 4th garage stall, I haven’t decided. I read *Percy’s Mission* too.”

“When do you get the barge trailer so we can cross the river?”

“I’ve been looking, but I’m not so sure we need one.”

“Expensive?”

“I suppose you get what you pay for, but yes they’re expensive.”

“We could hold out here for years, couldn’t we?”

“That was my thought and one of the principal reasons I dismissed the barge trailer.”

“How long before we have produce from the orchard?”

“Didn’t you ask?”

“No, didn’t you?”

“I didn’t because I left the choice of specific plants up to you. I suppose best guess would be either the second or third season. Once it starts producing, we’re going to have more food to can than you can imagine. I might just as well order the jars and lids now before the prices go up further. What do you think regular mouth quarts?”

“How much room is there?”

“Oh, maybe enough for 200 additional cases.”

“Fill the hole and get enough lids for two additional years.”

By the time our latest round of shopping was done, we were full up and didn't have space for another Super Pail or box of quarts. We also purchased two additional 30 quart canners bring the total to 4, the limit that would fit on the wood stove. While a good idea in and of itself, were it not for Lucy, we'd have replaced it with a propane stove. She taught Jan and Sally the delicate balance to keep just the right amount of wood burning for a canner load, or two or three or four.

I can now ride a horse at every pace it does. The Arabian and Morgan breeds produce horses specially bred for the western disciplines and offer western pleasure classes that draw large numbers of competitors. Our Morgans were well trained and once Jan and I were trained, everything worked out fine. We even bought a buggy and a buckboard for when we had them under harness. We never took the horse drawn vehicles off the forty, limiting our excursions to trips around the pasture.

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A check with the dealer concerning the Black Hills ammo revealed that they we're currently loading the 165gr SPBT and he asked if I wanted all 168gr HPBT. I asked about alternatives and he recommended Hornady 168gr A-MAX match. I told him to order 12 thousand rounds.

It was during the winter of '09-'10 that the news began to look bad. And, it looked bad on both the domestic front and the international front. Let me describe it, moving from west to east, starting with North Korea. Kim Jong Il died and his selected successor, Kim Jong Un, the so called Brilliant Comrade was in charge. Speculation was that he died of pancreatic cancer but the rumors remained unconfirmed. Bypassing the domestic front for the moment, to the East there were several problem areas.

Iran tried the protesters and executed all that were classified as leaders behind the unrest following the election. While it appeared that Ahmadinejad would continue as President it was obvious that Mousavi had best keep his mouth shut and head down before he lost his head, literally. A little further east brought us to Afghanistan where the War on Terror was going from bad to worse. Starting back around June, the American body count started to climb, edging up one or two each succeeding month from the previous month's level.

"They never learn do they?"

"Who, what?"

"Well, Bush kept the troop count down for far too long. Obama raising it was a day late and a dollar short. So now what we have is a protracted conflict in Afghanistan that we're going to eventually have to pull out of with nothing resolved."

"I'd have to agree with you Jan. Besides all the international concerns, Obama's promise of change isn't happening. It's business as usual and until the Special Election to fill

Kennedy's seat is certified, the Democrats lack their Super Majority. I'm surprised that the election was too close to call. Maybe having Mitt as a Senator isn't all bad. It will keep the healthcare initiative from passing until they work out something that may stand a chance of really working."

"What year did he run against Kennedy?"

"1994."

"If he's certified, Teddy will turn over in his grave."

"I doubt anyone is going to dig him up to confirm it. If the future votes go right down party lines, we'll have to wait for the results of the 2010 election to see which way Congress goes."

"Expecting something special?"

"Carly Fiorina is looking good. She spoke at the California State Republican Convention in February 2009. Fiorina is said to be considering a run for Senate against Barbara Boxer in 2010. On August 18, 2009, she announced that she had filed papers to form an exploratory committee to start exploring a candidacy for Boxer's Senate seat. She'll get some sympathy votes because of the breast cancer surgery in February."

"One Senator?"

"No, it gets better. Diane Feinstein has been reported as considering a run for Governor of California when Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is term limited. A private poll in July 2008 showed Feinstein far outpacing Jerry Brown, a former governor, 50 percent to 24 percent, with current Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi at 10 percent. A February 2009 poll showed that 36 percent of Democrats sampled in the poll said they would support Feinstein if she ran for governor. Brown earned 14 percent, followed by Gavin Newsom and Antonio Villaraigosa, who both pulled in 9 percent. About 22 percent were undecided."

"So if Fiorina beat Boxer and Feinstein ran for Governor, both California Senators might end up Republicans?"

"It's possible. The only thing that would make it better is if Feinstein lost."

The election held in November 2010 saw Feinstein win the Gubernatorial race and Fiorina beat Boxer handily. The other elections of interest saw Mitt Romney in the Senate seat for the next 6 years and with other swaps the Democrats were down to a bare majority in the House and 53 seats in the Senate. Both California Senators were Republicans, one man and one woman. Harry Reid also lost his seat, but Pelosi retained hers, unfortunately. You may know the new male Senator from California, he first came to

world attention as a body builder and married into the Kennedy family. He keeps saying he'll be back.

Fiction? Well, that's why they have Wiki; so you can check the facts for yourself. Look up Fiorina and Feinstein. Arnold is a lot like Reagan, popular. When they made Terminator IV without him, I assumed he'd stay in politics. It takes big ones to erect a tent on the Capital grounds so you can smoke a cigar. And, it's so politically incorrect. You can check that at Wiki too; look up Arnold. Fiction is so much better if it's based on fact.

With the change in the makeup of Congress, the President was fit to be tied. It seemed extremely unlikely that change would come in his first term. Without the promised change, some of the Fox All Stars wondered aloud if he'd get a second term. Charles Krauthammer, a perennial contributor to Special Report with Bret Baier (formerly Special Report with Brit Hume), was now a total skeptic concerning Obama's chances, and Juan Williams was pretty much in agreement.

I suppose that most can't relate to our circumstances. From my reading of the forums, many authors have a tendency to have their main characters being well prepared by using some device, like an insurance settlement, auto accident, inheritance and what not. That was not our case, I had old money from my grandfather and my father had more than I did. So, come the day that mom and dad were gone, Jan and I would probably have 9 figures tucked away not counting what she might get from her parents.

That assumed that everything went as it should and we didn't experience any natural or manmade disasters. Even if that happened, we could fall back on our preparations and the contents of the vault addition to the shelter. It was similar to having your cake and eating it at the same time.

I did appreciate one thing about the Patriot Fiction; the authors did 90% of my research for me. I could pick up from where they left off and refine it just a bit. Just because a person has money and spends it as needed doesn't make them a spendthrift. TOM liked Barrett and mentioned those and the McMillan Tac-50. Maybe even the AW-50, I can't recall. An AW-50 is like \$13-\$14 grand, the M82A about \$9 grand plus all those options and the Tac-50 about \$9 grand complete. But, I read the FAQs on the Barrett website and John and I agreed the model 99 would do nicely. The Hornady 168gr A-Max finally came in and I pretty much filled the vault.

Our haul out of the garden the previous year was substantial, mostly due to doubling the size of the garden. During spring and summer of 2010, with the compost added and thoroughly mixed in, the haul was even better and the unused portion of the unfinished side of the basement was stacked with case after case of home canned food. John and Sally kept the temperature in their mobile home between 55° and 60° and about half of their share from the garden was stored there.

As mentioned, they moved all but 6 weeks' worth of their LTS food to the storage building where we were storing our most recent order. Since canning wasn't a once a month

endeavor, they came down every weekend to help and Lucy was there watching the kids and asking questions. At Sally's suggestion their oldest, Melody, took over baby sitting with her sister Cheryl half helping and half needing a firm hand herself. Danny, just turned 13, mostly hung around with John and me. I taught him how to milk a cow, but I swear he squirted half of the milk on the floor.

Danny took to riding like a fish to water and we had him riding one of the geldings. The guns for their three had been acquired but not distributed save the Marlin 1895 Cowboy and the Ruger Vaqueros. There were three Loaded M1As and 3 Browning Hi-Powers for the kids that they were only allowed to use at a range. He thought long and hard before deciding on 590A1 shotguns for their family. He confided that the money he made off the various projects he'd done for us had paid for Sally and their kids' firearms and ammunition.

John bought military surplus for the rifles excluding the .22s. Like us, everyone had the 1895 Cowboy and a .45 Colt, a Ruger Vaquero. As a matter of fact, even Sally had the Loaded M1A. I hadn't realized how much business we'd sent his way. It was obviously quite a bit if he had purchased 5 of everything to outfit his family.

We were the only ones with the plastic guns. Ours had all of the improvements, short stroke gas piston, chrome lined chambers and barrels, 3X ACOGs and a lot of magazines. In the MBR category, two were Super Match and 3 were Loaded. I fully intended to get an NRA certified instructor for our kids.

One day a Sheriff's patrol car pulled in and a Deputy got out. He had some information and questions.

"The Sheriff asked me to stop by and visit with you. The BATFE arrested a fella last week who dealt in illegal firearms and ammunition. The guy didn't keep any records and denied knowing the names of any of his customers. He described one fella, when pressed, as a Cowboy. We asked around and your name came up. If you have any illegal firearms and/or ammunition, you would be well advised to either turn them in or dispose of them. The Sheriff allowed as how the stuff might turn up on our doorstep with the identity of whoever left it unknown."

"Illegal firearms and ammunition? Gee, I don't know. I favor the Springfield Armory M1A and have several. Have a couple of Barrett's and some Bushmaster semi-autos and so forth. What kind of stuff are you talking about?"

"That anti-material round our snipers use, the Mk211, LAW rockets, assorted hand grenades and suppressors are illegal in Missouri."

"The wife and I moved out here after graduation from Brown. We both taught History in St. Louis for a while, but she stopped with her third pregnancy and I stopped a year later. My family has some money and I didn't really have to work so I've concentrated on

our small 40 acre homestead. I never thought my deciding to wear western clothing would lead to me being accused of breaking the law.”

“We’re not accusing anyone of anything. It’s just a friendly visit since your name came up. We’ll do the same for others should their names come up. If we actually believed you were the customer he was talking about, I wouldn’t be here by my lonesome. Nice home, by the way.”

“Would you like a tour? I’m willing to show you the contents of my gun safe in the master bedroom if that will ease your mind.”

“I really am curious to see what these log homes look like on the inside.”

I gave the Deputy, Rob Simmons, the complete tour of the house including opening my gun safe and showing him the finished portion of the basement. He asked about the remainder of the basement and I explained that we were into prepping in a big way and it was mostly storage of food. I opened the door and he took a quick peek.

“Got enough food for a while, I’d say.”

“You know, some kind of natural disaster like a tornado blows through and who knows how long it would take before things got back to normal. We have the food stored so we wouldn’t have to be a burden and take food from others who might need it worse. We have a small gasoline and a small diesel tank buried and stabilized for the same reason.”

“I saw the wind turbine and the PV panels. Do you make all of your own electricity?”

“Yes and no. We’re tied into the grid and on rare occasions have to draw power. Most times, we’re actually feeding power back.”

“I haven’t been here recently, but I don’t recall an orchard.”

“That’s new; the plants came from a nursery in St. Louis. They do the necessary work to keep the plants fit. We expect we may get our first crops this year.”

“Nice compact operation, I like it. What’s with the mobile home?”

“The guy who was responsible for erecting most of our buildings, John Gibson, lives in Oakville and his wife and he set the trailer here in case there was a problem in St. Louis and they had to leave the area. It’s connected to our septic, water, power and has its own propane tank.”

“What’s with that other large building?”

“Our storage building? Want to see? I store our Unimog U500 and accessories plus our Toolcat 5600 and accessories in there. We also have spare canning jars, some long term food and a wood burning stove. It has a half bath for convenience.”

“So a prepper, you say. Some folks call people of your description survivalists. Got a bomb shelter?”

“We have a storm shelter. John brought that up before the log home was erected because of tornados. We decided on a separate shelter because the house could fall into the basement. Do you need to see that too?”

“No, just curious. Kind of figured you didn’t go to this extent of being prepared without some kind of shelter.”

“If you check it out, you can truthfully tell the Sheriff you checked everything.”

“In that case...”

“Hang on, let me get the key.”

“You keep it locked?”

“Doesn’t everyone?”

“Actually...”

“Here we go. Hang on while I slide the cover out of the way. Watch your step, the stairway is long and fairly steep.”

“That door there says this is a bomb shelter.”

“I suppose that was in the back of our minds. Why build a shelter and leave out the most important parts like the blast door and air filtration system. There are two bedrooms and one bunkroom. That door over there opens to an oval concrete pipe with the backup generator in a small room at the end. Three quarter bath, four in one kitchen, communications and radiation equipment in that cabinet.”

“No gun safe?”

“Sorry.”

One of the things John and I had done was move the faraday cage/cabinet to the area in front of the vault door. If you opened the cabinet and slid a lever to the left, the cabinet was detached from the wall and rolled silently forward against the piano hinge on the right side. To secure the vault door, the cabinet was returned to its normal location and the lever slid to the right, locking it in place. You see, bad news spreads fast and

we knew about the arrest of Mr. Shady almost before the Sheriff. I had called John the moment I'd heard and he was down within an hour making the modification. It was like FDR said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933:

This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.

And the faraday cage/cabinet sat on newly installed soft rollers allowing it to move effortlessly. We could give anyone the tour and except by remote chance, our secrets were safe. Even if Mr. Shady had John and my names written down, they'd have to find the illegal stuff before they could make an arrest. Our OpSec was of the highest order.

"What did the Deputy want besides a tour?"

"That guy we acquired the illegal stuff from was arrested by the BATFE. Apparently he described one of his purchasers as a Cowboy and the Sheriff's office made local inquiries. They came up with my name and the Deputy was here on a fishing trip. Said we could turn it in and the Sheriff would look the other way."

"Did you believe him?"

"I didn't know what to believe, so I didn't take any chances."

"They are allowed to lie to people now and any information they illicit can be used in court."

"I didn't know that. Anyway, he didn't find anything that I didn't want him to see."

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The President also lost any chance he had of getting the Assault Weapons Ban reenacted with the results of the 2010 election. Surprisingly, Arnold said he would support it if it came up, but it didn't come up because of other, more pressing issues. Fiorina took an opposite stance, essentially cancelling out Arnold's vote.

In a last ditch attempt to spur action from Congress on the war in Afghanistan and healthcare reform, Obama decided to address the nation. The address would come from the White House at 9pm Eastern. We tuned in because that was about all there was on TV. I had taken Jan out for dinner to celebrate Valentine's Day, 2011 and Lucy

stayed to see the broadcast. The President walked down the hallway to the podium and began his address.

My fellow Americans,

I come to you tonight with two issues of tremendous importance, the ongoing battle against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and healthcare reform which remains stalled in Congress.

Our efforts in Afghanistan have become mired by the continued bombings by terrorists. The Secretary of Defense and I, in consultation with the Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that it will be necessary to once again increase our troops deployed to that country. Accordingly, five additional combat brigades will be deployed during the next six weeks along with additional support personnel. It is our hope...

The screen blinked white and then went to snow. A fox newscaster came onscreen a few moments later.

We have just lost our live feed from Washington without explanation... Wait, this just in, Fox is announcing a breaking news alert. It appears that a ground detonation of a large nuclear weapon occurred in the proximity of the White House. We lost our satellite feed of the broadcast and our Washington Bureau is offline. Communications were lost in a wide area. At the moment there is no indication if this was a terrorist attack or an act by one of the nuclear powers. Please stand by while we try to gather additional information.

“I guess he won’t be running for reelection in 2012.”

“How can you be flip at a time like this? Someone has attacked our country! My God, think of the implications when they figure out who was behind this.”

“My vote is for Al Qaeda Jan.”

My cell phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Yes, we were watching John. At the moment, I think maybe terrorists finally got their hands on a large warhead. Yes, only two countries build multi-megaton warheads, China and Russia. Well, you know there have been allegations that the Russians have lost track of some of their weapons. I’ve heard the claims that bin Laden has been trying to acquire nukes, but how would they be able to smuggle a large warhead like that into the country? Well, if Sally and you think it best, I’ll go turn up the heat in your mobile home. See you soon.”

“Are they driving down?”

“So it would appear. He seems to be concerned that because of the size of the weapon, Russia and/or China are going to be blamed. He was paying better attention or watching a different channel. Not only was the President there, so was the Secretary of Defense and all but one of the Joint Chiefs. He went on to say that with just a little warning, they could have gotten to President to limited shelter, but with the device going off during the middle of his speech, he doubted many, if any, in the White House survived.”

“You go turn up their heat and I’ll make more coffee. Lucy, could I have a word with you?”

“Yes, what is it?”

“I would like you to stay the night. There is the twin bed in the girls’ bedroom and some night gowns that will fit in the dresser. Not that it’s important, but you will be on the clock.”

“Do you really think it is necessary Jan?”

“I wouldn’t ask if I believed otherwise. Is there anything you need from Barnhart?”

“I’d really like to run in and pick up a suitcase and Astor (her cat).”

“Ok, but you promise to return?”

“Yes, I’ll come back. Astor will do fine outside and might even find a mouse.”

I turned up the heat in the mobile home and saw Lucy pulling out. I went to check on our livestock and added a bit more hay. By the time I finished getting them set, Lucy was pulling back in the drive. When she got out, she set her cat on the ground and pulled a suitcase from the back seat. I assumed that Jan had wanted her to stay. About 30 minutes after Lucy returned, John, Sally, Melody, Danny and Cheryl did. John was pulling a trailer and I opened the door to the storage building so he could back it in.

“What’s on the trailer?”

“Our firearms, ammo, the remainder of our LTS food and the canned goods. I may be jumping the gun, but better safe than sorry.”

“I was going to let you know what a blessing in disguise moving the cabinet in the shelter was. We had a visit from a Deputy looking for a Cowboy. I gave him the grand tour and with the exception of the vault, he knows what we have. Mr. Shady gave me up; thank God he never asked names.”

“You’re not the only person in the area that prefers western wear. I have some myself. Except for the fleece lined drover’s coat it’s all about medium quality; jeans from Penney’s, blue long sleeve cotton work shirts and what not.”

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 4

“Jan got Lucy to stay the night and there’s fresh coffee on. I’d like to get back to the TV and get the latest developments about Washington.”

“Can you believe this crap? There are going to be heads rolling over this one. Imagine someone sneaking in a nuke.”

“Haven’t you seen that docudrama put out by the Nuclear Threat Initiative called *Last Best Chance* starring Fred Dalton Thompson? I’ve got it if you haven’t seen it. You can get a copy. Anyway the long and short of it is that there are multiple sources of nuclear material available in the world and if a terrorist organization or two or three get their hands on some, they can easily bring a weapon into the country and detonate it. I’m speculating here, but I think this was a terrorist act related to either Al Qaeda or the Taliban.”

“Why do you think that?”

“The moment he announced the troop increase, the bomb went off. If he had announced a troop reduction, maybe it might not have been detonated.”

“That’s pretty thin.”

“Yes, I guess it is. It’s the best I can come up with at the moment. I wonder who will claim credit for the act.”

“No one in their right mind would do that. Our National Command Authority just went up in smoke. Now What?”

“A designated survivor (or designated successor) is a member of the US Cabinet who stays at a physically distant, secure, and undisclosed location when the President and the country's other top leaders are gathered at a single location, such as during State of Union Addresses and presidential inaugurations. This maintains continuity of government with regard to presidential succession in the remote possibility of a catastrophic event which might wipe out large portions of the US's federal government, including the entire slate of individuals designated by law in the line of succession to the presidency. Since US law does not provide for anyone to assume the office of president if everyone on this list is simultaneously killed, the practice of designating a survivor is intended to effectively eliminate the chance of that happening. It originated during the Cold War amid fears of a nuclear attack. Only cabinet members who are eligible to succeed to the presidency (i.e., natural-born citizens) can be chosen as designated survivors.

“Since 2005, members of Congress have also served as designated survivors. In addition to serving as a rump legislature in the event that all of their colleagues were killed, a surviving Representative and Senator could ascend to the offices of Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate, offices which immediately follow the

Vice President in the line of succession. If such a legislative survivor were the sitting Speaker or President Pro Tempore – as for the 2005, 2006, and 2007 State of the Union addresses, in which President Pro Tempore Ted Stevens or Senator Robert Byrd was also a designated survivor – he would take the office of President rather than the surviving Cabinet member. However it is unclear whether another legislator could do so without first being elected to that leadership position by a quorum of their respective house.”

“Great explanation, whatever you said, but who is the NCA now?”

“All members of the Executive Branch are subordinate to the President and the Constitution specifically provides that the President is the Executive Branch. The Vesting Clause of Article II provides that “[t]he executive Power [of the United States] shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.” Proponents of the unitary executive theory argue that this language, along with the Take Care Clause (“The President shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed...”), creates a “hierarchical, unified executive department under the direct control of the President.” Under that theory, whoever is President is NCA, period.”

“And?”

“Someone was the designated survivor and they’ll go down the line of succession until they get to that person if no higher successor is alive.”

“Oh no, not Arnold.”

“Not American born. Carly Fiorina could be the surviving Senator. Let’s wait and see.”

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...weapon was determined to be a 2 megaton warhead constructed by the People’s Republic of China specifically for their DF-5 missile. Reports that the Chinese warhead was a 5 megaton warhead are not borne out by our investigation of that missile on Global Security Organization’s website. While the website mentions a 5 megaton warhead, the specifications for the missile indicate a 2 megaton warhead. The People’s Republic of China denied any wrong doing almost simultaneously with the determination of the size of the warhead by NORAD.

At the moment, it is uncertain who will succeed President Obama. Apparently a Cabinet Officer, a Representative and a Senator were designated survivors. For those unfamiliar with the term, a designated...

“We’d better get some sleep. Or, if you’d prefer, Jan can make another pot of coffee.”

“Not on my account, I’m coffee’d out. I think Sally and I will turn in and try to get a little sleep. What time do you usually get up in the morning?”

“About seven. It used to be earlier before I retired because of the drive. These days, I’m a man of leisure.”

“Are you sure about that? Things may change rapidly.”

“I am until they do.”

“It almost sounded like you were lecturing John.”

“Not really, he had some questions that are typical of the situation, like ‘what now’?”

“And you gave him a lecture on Constitutional Law.”

“The Constitution is the Law of the land and the ultimate power in this country. You know that as well as I do, we were in the same class. I speculated that either Al Qaeda or the Taliban was behind the bombing because of the timing. The moment he announced the troop increase, Kaboom. Bin Laden has been trying to get his hands on nuclear weapons for about 15 years now. Maybe he finally succeeded.”

“Assuming he was, what will that mean?”

“I’m not really sure but we can nuke Pakistan and Afghanistan in hopes of possibly getting lucky and taking him out. The American people wouldn’t stand for it and I’m positive the major world powers wouldn’t.”

“We’d better shut up and get some sleep, 7 comes early.”

...Locke, the Secretary of Commerce, was sworn in as President at 3am Eastern Time. Gary Locke is the first Chinese American to be elected as the King County Executive. He then became the first Chinese American to be elected as Governor of Washington. On December 4, 2008, the Associated Press reported that Locke was a potential candidate for Secretary of Interior in then President-elect Barack Obama’s cabinet. Eventually, then Colorado Senator, Ken Salazar, was nominated for that position instead.

On February 25, 2009, Locke was announced as President Barack Obama's choice for Secretary for Commerce. His nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate by unanimous consent on March 24, 2009. Locke was sworn in March 26, 2009, by District judge Richard A. Jones. He was sworn in by President Obama on May 1, 2009. He is the first Chinese American Secretary of Commerce, and the third Asian American in Obama's cabinet, joining the late Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Veteran Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, the most of any administration.

Locke will serve out the remainder of Obama’s term and be eligible for two terms of his own because the remaining portion of Obama’s term was less than 2 years as provided by the twenty second Amendment. We’ll be back after this message from...

Interesting, Obama is killed by a nuke manufactured by the Chinese and we now have a third generation Chinese American as President. The conspiracy nuts were going to have a field day with this one. However, had Locke not been the Designated Successor, it could have been Chu or Shinseki. Congress had more members away from Washington than normal and could raise a quorum in both the House and Senate. Under the circumstances, I felt sure they would confirm most, if not all, of Locke's Cabinet appointments. Congress had moved temporarily to the Greenbrier Hotel, although some had suggested Watergate.

For most of its history the hotel was owned by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and its successors, currently CSX Corporation. Following a year of heavy losses, CSX placed the hotel into bankruptcy in 2009. Local entrepreneur Jim Justice subsequently bought the property and guaranteed all debts, resulting in dismissal of the bankruptcy. Justice has promised to return the hotel to its former status as a five star resort, and perhaps to introduce "tasteful" gambling for guests as a revenue enhancer. The Greenbrier is also the site of a massive underground bunker that was meant to serve as an emergency shelter for the US Congress during the Cold War.

On March 20, 2009, the resort filed for bankruptcy, listing debt of up to \$500 million and assets of \$100 million. The resort lost \$166 million in 2008. Pending court and regulatory approval, the resort was to be sold to the Marriott hotel chain (which has operated it), contingent upon significant concessions from the unions and approval of \$50 million in financing from CSX. The Marriott Corporation asserted that it had a valid contract to purchase the hotel, and expected to see that contract honored. However, Justice ultimately settled with Marriott, and the bankruptcy judge dismissed the case on May 19, 2009, clearing the way for Justice's purchase of the property.

The center (bunker) was maintained by government workers posing as hotel audiovisual employees, and operated under a dummy company named Forsythe Associates. Many of these same workers are now employed by the hotel and, for a time, gave guided tours. The complex is still maintained by The Greenbrier, and the facility remains much as it was in 1992, when the secret was revealed in the national press. While almost all of the furnishings were removed following the decommissioning of the bunker, the facility now has similar period furnishings to approximate what the bunker looked like while it was still in operation. Two of the original bunks in the dormitories remain.

"I have Danny milking the cow. I think he'll get most of it in the bucket this time."

"I still have to go feed them."

"I did that for you. Good practice in case something more dramatic than last night happens."

"Did you hear about the new President?"

“No, who is it?”

“Gary Locke, a 3rd generation Chinese American.”

“Our President is killed by a Chinese weapon and the new President is a Chinese American?”

“Yeah, the conspiracy nuts are going to have a field day.”

“Are the Chinese still claiming that it wasn’t their warhead?”

“All I heard on the TV was about Locke becoming President. Since today is Tuesday, Sally and you ought to consider spending the week, while things get sorted out. I don’t really know, but I’d imagine accusations are going to be flying every which way until they find someone to blame for the detonation. After that, they’ll have to settle the issue of how someone got their hands on a Chinese warhead.”

“What if it wasn’t Chinese?”

“That would mean that it was Russian. They haven’t built any warheads that size for 30 years. They had one on an early missile and one on the Stilleto, I believe, that might have been in that yield range.”

“How do you know?”

“I keep my eyes on Global Security and the FAS websites. They have a lot of information, but unfortunately some of it is conflicting. Like that 5 megaton warhead with a 2 megaton yield.”

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The US called for an immediate meeting of the UN Security Council. That was probably a delaying action so they could figure out who did what. It had to be, no one in our government was stupid enough to have any faith in the UN. John Bolton had seen to that. He once said, *there is no such thing as the United Nations. There is only the international community, which can only be led by the only remaining superpower, which is the United States.* He also stated that *the Secretariat Building in New York has 38 stories. If you lost ten stories today, it wouldn't make a bit of difference.*

Our Ambassador complained to the Security Council about a Chinese warhead being used on American soil. The Chinese Ambassador countered with evidence that it wasn’t the only country with 2mT warheads and that an inventory accounted each and every one of their weapons. The Russia Ambassador also claimed that its entire stockpile of nukes had been checked and as of an hour before the meeting, none were missing. Neither country volunteered for inspection of their weapons by the IAEA.

Our Ambassador didn't have pictures like Adlai Stevenson had in '62 and could offer no direct proof. Even the US didn't have a weapon that large, he said. Our largest had an adjustable warhead with a maximum yield of 1.2mT. He again suggested that Russia and China could prove their claims by permitting an IAEA inspection. Although reluctant, Russia finally agreed forcing the Chinese to do the same.

Russia had about 4,000 weapons for the IAEA to confirm while China had 'less than 500'. Our Ambassador said that in the spirit of international cooperation the IAEA would be allowed to inspect all of our weapons once the Russian and Chinese inspections were completed and a Russian nuclear weapons expert could accompany the IAEA when they inspected ours. China then agreed to allow a Russian expert and a US expert to work with the IAEA provided they could provide an expert to join the Russian inspecting the American weapons.

The Security Council approved the agreement. China had ~400 weapons and verification was completed in 2 months. Russia had more than 4,000 weapons spread out over a large territory resulting in a 20 month verification that likewise confirmed their inventory was complete. Finally they got to the US with its 4,000 plus weapons. Most of our weapons were in storage and easily verified.

Some were at Air Force Bases ready to be loaded on the B-52s and B-2s. The now conventional B-1B had been restored to carry nukes and it took a full year to verify our weapons stockpile. The complete verification took 34 months.

John and Sally had only stayed until the weekend and then returned home. This verification process was like waiting for a pot to boil, it seemingly lasted forever with nothing amiss at the end. The verifications lasted until the last week of Christmas 2014.

General Colin Powell was nominated to fill the Vice Presidency. Saying that he only intended to serve until the election of 2012, he was a shoe in. Gary Locke had been reelected twice having done a respectable job working with both parties ironing out healthcare reform. He also finished the drawdown of troops in Afghanistan.

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The question concerning the source of the weapon remained unresolved. The weapons signature indicated a thermonuclear warhead, i.e., a hydrogen weapon. Our forces remained on DEFCON 4 even though all of our troops had been withdrawn worldwide. After the last person was withdrawn from the Middle East, the Afghanistan drawdown began and when it was complete, South Korea followed. President Locke retained such military that reenlisted but recruiting efforts were put on hold. Even then, the military got a fair number of volunteers and they were accepted as replacements for eventual retirees.

We were pulling troops and our equipment home, one country at a time. The last troops brought home were those stationed in Germany, during the third year of Locke's first

elected term, about five years after the assassination. By this time (2016), we were no longer the world's policeman. NATO was forced to accept that role and our participation in NATO was limited. Russia was a member of NATO and provided the bulk of the troops. The Senate had a Republican majority and the House a Democratic majority and rarely did the twain meet.

Our children were growing up and Jan and I provided home schooling, both being certified teachers. All three were riding and were fairly handy with a firearm. The end of the War on Terror saw a sharp increase in supplies of ammunition and one could buy all the Lake City ammo wanted for a fair price. The economy had recovered in fits and starts and housing prices were finally back to where they had been when the housing bubble burst.

Auto makers had been forced to produce vehicles meeting strict emission and mileage criteria. Our two Suburban's had been tweaked about to the limit and could still meet the emissions standards. I wasn't sure that would hold, given the compulsory limits for future years. Neither vehicle had high mileage because we didn't drive much. Twice a year trips to Sam's and Costco constituted our 'long distance' travel.

My father had suffered a fatal heart attack in 2012. I believe in my heart that my mother grieved herself to death because she died within a year after he did. I arranged for the distribution of the clothing and furnishings of the Westchester County home to charity and sold the home. The attorney handed the estate called and asked me what I wanted to do with the contents of Dad's safe. When I asked what was in it, I got the shock of my life, US Eagles, silver and gold, and a lot of them. I asked him to arrange secure shipping and send any of the remaining firearms that Dad and Mom may have had.

That was a further shock; apparently Dad had made a few trips outside of New York and had built an armory of his own. The center piece was an Accuracy International AS-50 with Zeiss optics. His combat rifle was an M21 from Springfield Armory and he had a H&K USP tactical with suppressor. It's a shame that he didn't have a Surefire for the M21 or a suppressor for the AS-50. The AW-50 is bolt action and the AS-50 is semi-auto. The accuracy didn't compare with my Barrett as it was a 1.5MOA rifle while the model 99 was below 1MOA.

There was no generation skipping involved in his estate. He left $\frac{1}{3}$ to Mom and $\frac{2}{3}$ to me, putting us into the low nine figures. When she passed, I got what was left after taxes, cementing our place in the low nine figures. We wouldn't be on anyone's list of the richest people, but we were more than comfortable.

"It's a shame he didn't buy those suppressors."

"I agree Jan, but Mr. Shady is doing 10-20 and we don't have another source."

"With the money you have, that shouldn't be a problem."

“We have.”

“Whatever. Talk to John and explain the problem to him and indicate that price is no object. Since you have another .50, you need more of the exploding ammo. I’m beginning to think that we should get those automatic lowers for the Bushmasters and that we should have one apiece. I think we do, don’t we?”

“Yes, but as you said, three have semi-auto lowers. Ok, I’ll talk to John when I can. He’s working on a large project where they’re putting in multiple logs homes for a MAG.”

“Is he doing the shelter too?”

“Apparently, but just the actual shelter and none of the furnishings.”

“By the way, Lucy agreed to sell her home and move out here permanently. I told her we’d put in a new singlewide or doublewide, her choice.”

“Did she choose?”

“Yes, a 16’x80’ single wide. I have the model number. They’re from someplace in Ohio, I think. It’s the 8081.”

“Can you take care of that while I see what we can do about the munitions and accessories for our firearms?”

“No problem.”

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I had a long talk with John and told him what I needed/wanted. The lowers weren’t a major problem; the suppressors were described as difficult but doable. The Mk211 was a whole different matter which he described as extremely difficult. However, if I had money to burn, he’d get it done, for a consideration. The consideration was 5 cases of M118LR and 10 cases of Mk211 for his .50. My attitude, good or bad, was, *Well, it’s only money*. That’s easy to say when you have some.

In the fall of 2016, that ongoing problem over the Kashmir raised its ugly head yet again. It was turning into a three way battle involving China, Pakistan and India. The Chinese had started it this time, sending in an overwhelming force and seizing the half claimed by India and the third claimed by Pakistan. The latter two countries mobilized and actually joined forces to expel China. MSM announced that they had an agreement that when China was expelled, Pakistan got the territory claimed by China, effectively give each country half of the Kashmir.

We had finished harvesting the outside garden, had Lucy’s new home installed and occupied and John had come through with the needed items. The ammunition he wanted

was stored in their mobile home at our place. We reactivated our warning system, Delta Echo/Alpha Delta Echo and improved it to include other possibilities. Victor stood for a volcanic eruption Sierra Victor a super volcano. Echo followed by a location indicated an earthquake and its locus. Tango a threatened tornado and Alpha Sierra for an Asteroid/Comet from Space.

During the course of building the shelter and the homes at the MAG compound, John developed a source that could provide the current DEFCON/THREATCON/LERTCON/EMERGCONS and Material Conditions of our military. By opening a single document on my laptop I could review the steps involved in establishing Material Conditions and translate the various Defense/Threat levels and respond appropriately. In addition, we had established an unscheduled monthly check-in confirming current conditions.

We were blessed in that our children were being home schooled. Not only was their education better than all but a fancy Prep school could offer, it kept them home and under our watchful eye. Jan and I were now of a mind that there was no such thing as being too prepared. Our LTS food supplies had been increased and increased again. We were careful not to put up more home canned food than could be consumed in one year which meant that our maximum supply before the summer was a one year supply and towards fall approached 21 months.

Add to that the one year supply of commercial food from Costco and Sam's and it could be as much as 33 months before we were forced to open our LTS food supplies. Those were rotated on a continuing basis because they needed to be and we actually preferred some of the freeze dried to home canned or store bought.

With Jan being the world history specialist, she kept an eye on the news and we both carried portable NWS SAME radios, just in case. Her expressed fears was that one of the three nations involved in the Kashmir war would resort to nuclear weapons, and in the process, involve other nations leading to an all-out global thermonuclear war. I'll admit I couldn't dismiss her concerns. When the US economy crashed in '08-'09, we'd taken other countries with us. Our recovery took a while but some of the others were still in the recovery phase and bringing our troops home had eliminated a fair number of US dollars from their economies.

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"This is John with an unannounced check-in. No change in status."

"Rog. Coming down this weekend?"

"Negative, maybe the next weekend; I want to sight the rifles in using the M118LR. My source seems to think that something is going on behind the scenes although we remain at DEFCON 4 and THREATCON Normal and the Navy is at X-Ray. The Department of Homeland Security has us at Yellow, just like always."

“How’s the MAG project coming?”

“It’s completed, ahead of schedule and under cost. Got a nice bonus out of that.”

“Don’t spend it all in one place.”

“We probably will, on more preps. Need anything when we come down?”

“Not that I can think of off the top of my head. Watch your six and keep your powder dry.”

“Always.”

I don’t believe I mentioned John’s military background. US Army, fought in Iraq one tour and Afghanistan for one tour, but in the other order. Ground pounder, e.g., infantry, 11B. No fancy titles like Designated Marksman, etc. But he was a very good shot with both the 5.56 and the 7.62. His .50 was a McMillan Tac-50 and he could pretty much shoot to the limit of the rifle under ideal conditions (0.5MOA). His failing, if any, was insufficient time to practice especially recently when he’d been working on the MAG project. His rifle had the Night Force NXS 8–32×56 Mil-dot telescopic sight plus a MUNS AN/PVS-27. His ammo of choice was the 750 grain Hornady A-MAX Match. Over the years, John had accumulated quite a bit of the ammo and stored it in our armory.

That Deputy? He never came back, so I don’t know what to tell you. There was a case pending before the Supreme Court challenging the NFA arguing that it violated the 2nd Amendment. Successful challenges had already been made to Bush’s EO, the FOPA, the 1968 Gun Control Act and the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. Only the one left to go and Americans would have their rights back, where permitted by local laws. That challenge to Bush’s EO was the only the third time an Executive Order had been challenged. Strict Constructionists ruled the court 6-3.

It was during early September and the situation in the Kashmir had continued to heat up. My cell phone rang about the same time as my NWS radio chimed. The message on the phone was short, Alpha Delta Echo. This was confirmed by the radio, incoming missiles had been detected, but no country of origin was being reported. Since Jan had her radio, I started to take care of the livestock, ensuring they were housed and fed. That Castlebrook barn still stood, but we had had another barn built. The new barn was connected to the generator room and thereby the shelter. It was a dome constructed of reinforced concrete and covered with six feet of earth.

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 5

We had erected it for this very reason, basing the design yet again on *Percy's Mission*, more or less. I hastily moved the livestock to the barn and activated the heavy duty shutters designed to provide a protection factor about 5,000. When I finished, I helped Jan, Lucy and the kids with the last load to the shelter. We entered and I pulled the AMP radiation equipment from the faraday cage/cabinet and hooked it up. A banging sound on the shelter door a few minutes later indicated we had company. It was John and his family and they had parked the SUV and trailer in the storage building.

About 5 minutes later, there was pounding on the door a second time, one each Deputy Rob Simmons with wife and two teens.

“Would you have room for four more?”

“Did you tell anyone else?”

“No, your secret was safe with me. I have some LTS food and some firearms if that makes a difference.”

“It doesn't, but come in and let's get the door closed. We're out of beds so it will either be hot racking or cots.”

“Cots would be fine. Is there anything I can do?”

“We have a few minutes; bring down your weapons and supplies.”

“Kids, Maria, give me a hand.”

We soon learned that their children, Maria 15 and Robert 13 we accomplished shooters in their own right and had weapons of their own. I opened the cabinet, moved the lever to the left and swiveled out the cabinet. I then opened the vault and we placed the weapons in the armory.

“I'd have never found that with a month of looking. Very clever.”

“Would you believe that we only did that the day before you showed up? I wasn't expecting you, but we'd heard about Mr. Shady getting arrested and tried to cover our butts.”

Very few people name their daughters after the mother. Maria, the mom, was from Mexico originally and it wasn't uncommon there. Since I was Seth IV, I couldn't say much about Robert Jr. They had perhaps a six month supply of LTS food for four or one year for two. They had purchased from Walton Feed. Like many in Law Enforcement, he was ex-military, USMC. Rob was between John and me in age.

We felt the devices explode over St. Louis, the ground shaking ever so slightly. We began getting radiation readings almost immediately. That was reasonable because we were about 20 nautical or 23 statute miles from St. Louis. I never said 'way out'.

"What I don't understand is how this happened," Rob said. "I would have expected Iran to have done something back in October 2009 after Israel struck their nuclear plants in late September. Yes, there was a war over the Kashmir, but, how did it go nuclear?"

"If I had to guess, someone launched on China and given China's limited weapons, they launched on everyone, Pakistan, India, Russia and us for good measure. When war-heads began to rain on Russia, they implemented an all-out attack. We probably retaliated with our Minuteman III missiles since they were in fixed locations. No doubt as many bombers as could be were loaded with weapons and moved to a secure location like Groom, Rogers or Rosamond. That leaves us with a full load of Trident missiles to use as we see fit. The only limitation on our nuclear subs is the amount of stores they carry and we can cover that with unreprs."

"It's stupid, just plain stupid."

"Hard to argue with that Deputy. Thing is, it happened and now we have to live with it. Jan and I should have gone further down I-55, but we're here now and aren't going anywhere."

"And I'm glad that we got out of Oakville. The radiation level there is probably 3,000R. What about your livestock?"

"I got them into the new barn and the shutters closed. We can take the tunnel to the generator room and the tunnel from there to the new barn."

"You think that up on your own?"

"Afraid not. Read about it in a story, *Percy's Mission*. It was also behind our acquisition of the Unimog and the Toolcat."

"Did I see some .50 caliber rifles in that armory?"

"Four. I had two Barrett model 99s and ended up with my father's AS-50. John has a McMillan Tac-50. We have most of the by golly gee wiz accessories like night scopes, match ammo and multipurpose ammo. All of our Bushmasters have military A1 lowers and the Bushmaster short stroke gas piston uppers. There aren't many of us and there are actually times when full auto is a benefit."

"Like?"

"Ambush or suppressing fire. Most other times, it's a waste of ammo. We're not short on ammo by any means but it may be a long while before we can replace it."

“You don’t reload?”

“No, do you?”

“I can reload 12-gauge, 5.56, 7.62 and .50BMG.”

“We have pails of brass we saved.”

“As soon as I can get my equipment, I’ll start reloading. Don’t have enough primers or powder so we’ll probably have to salvage some.”

“That’s good to hear.”

“What, that I reload?”

“No, it was good to hear you use the term salvage.”

“It’s not the same as looting.”

“Yeah, we know. We didn’t figure a Deputy would know.”

“Well, for someone with an armory full of illegal weapons, you don’t have much room to talk.”

“It’s a simple exercise of a basic inalienable right, the right to keep and bear arms. The 2nd Amendment didn’t require permission or tax stamps.”

“Sez you.”

“Sez the founding fathers in 1791 or thereabouts.”

“Hey you two, knock it off. I should have known mixing a Historian and a LEO wouldn’t work out.”

“Be that as it may, no more, ok?”

“Yeah, sorry Rob.”

“Me too, Seth.”

Jan and Lucy had started a batch of bread and she said it would be sometime before the cinnamon rolls were finished. The dough had to rise, be knocked down shaped in loaves and placed in the pans. The leftover dough was rolled out, topped with butter, sugar and cinnamon and allowed to rise while the bread baked. However the coffee urn had stopped perking and we had plenty of coffee.

We put Danny to monitoring the various radiation meters and recording the readings on a preprinted form I had made up. Jan had two Cloer Electric Water Kettles and got water going to tea and hot cocoa. How long had the war lasted? Start to finish, probably less than an hour. There was a reason why they called the associated doctrine MAD.

Mutual assured destruction (MAD) is a doctrine of military strategy in which a full-scale use of nuclear weapons by two opposing sides would effectively result in the destruction of both the attacker and the defender. It is based on the theory of deterrence according to which the deployment of strong weapons is essential to threaten the enemy in order to prevent the use of the very same weapons. The strategy is effectively a form of Nash equilibrium, in which both sides are attempting to avoid their worst possible outcome – nuclear annihilation. It is now generally hypothesized that the nuclear fallout or nuclear winter resulting from a large scale nuclear war would bring about worldwide devastation, though this was not a critical assumption to the theory of MAD.

In practice, the theory proved both utterly effective and exceptionally dangerous (e.g., Cuban Missile Crisis) through the end of the Cold War. Today, all lesser nations are believed to be keenly aware that any use of nuclear weapons, in any context, is the recipe for their annihilation. Significant nuclear powers, such as the United States, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China (PRC), operate under the deterrent effect of potential retaliation with respect to "first use" in the conduct of brush fire wars and other lesser confrontations. The US, as possessor of the largest and most deployable stockpile of nuclear weapons, continues to exercise its vast nuclear might as a cornerstone of its foreign policy with regard to rogue states and communist nations that currently or may soon possess nuclear weapons technology. US military forces stand on permanent alert in order to deter potential nuclear adversaries. Likewise, non-democratic nations cannot use nuclear weapons against the US, or her critical allies (UK, Canada, Japan, Germany, Israel, Australia, and South Korea) without threat of (as US President John F. Kennedy said) a "full retaliatory" response by the United States.

In game theory, Nash equilibrium (named after John Forbes Nash, see *A Brilliant Mind*, who proposed it) is a solution concept of a game involving two or more players, in which each player is assumed to know the equilibrium strategies of the other players, and no player has anything to gain by changing only his or her own strategy unilaterally. If each player has chosen a strategy and no player can benefit by changing his or her strategy while the other players keep theirs unchanged, then the current set of strategy choices and the corresponding payoffs constitute a Nash equilibrium.

Stated simply, Amy and Bill are in Nash equilibrium if Amy is making the best decision she can, taking into account Bill's decision, and Bill is making the best decision he can, taking into account Amy's decision. Likewise, many players are in Nash equilibrium if each one is making the best decision that he or she can, taking into account the decisions of the others. However, Nash equilibrium does not necessarily mean the best cumulative payoff for all the players involved; in many cases all the players might improve

their payoffs if they could somehow agree on strategies different from the Nash equilibrium (e.g. competing businesses forming a cartel in order to increase their profits).

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It would be a while before we could extricate ourselves from the shelter, somewhere between 9 and 16 months according to the radiation readings Danny was noting. The natural decay of the radiation would put it below 100mR at 9 months and below 50mR at 16 months. We didn't really need to go out for much, not with the access we had to the dome barn. We would want to exit briefly before then to begin the process of removing the radiation around the homes.

Fortunately the camera mounted on the antenna tower survived the EMP and radiation. Mounted on a standoff, it was a Pan/Tilt Zoom Veilux SVP-F18X Dome Security Camera. The greatest feature that this auto tracking camera can provide is starting auto tracking from different triggers, for instance start auto tracking when motion is triggered at the home view location of the camera, or start auto tracking after the camera moves to the predefined preset. Furthermore this camera is capable of defining 256 presets which can cover 360 degrees of views, camera can be set to auto cruise from preset to preset within a defined dwell time for each preset and if a motion is triggered at the preset that would trigger auto tracking. A dwell time for auto tracking can also be set to restart auto cruising after motion stops at the present location.

The auto tracking PTZ cameras also come in different day/night mode with extremely low LUX functionality. The cameras can operate up to 0.01 LUX at dark conditions with the automatic electromechanical infrared cut filter to provide clarity black and white picture at night. The cut filter provides crisp clear day/night image, filtering out the UV sunlight during the day and clear picture noise filtration during the night. The cameras also offer enhanced backlight compensation giving providing comparable to a wide dynamic range camera quality.

However, we only had six suits with gas masks, boots and gloves. John said Sally and he had five and Rob didn't have any.

I decided to invoke the one parent rule, ergo, only one parent of a couple could be suited up and outside the shelter in case we needed to go out. And, to avoid giving away the shelter location, we would exit from the dome. This meant that in the near future, someone was going to have to go outside and close the metal stairwell covering and move some of the firewood on it to conceal it. I volunteered because we wouldn't be having additional children.

Initially intended for six, our 1,800ft² shelter now held 6+5+4 or 15 souls, reducing the square footage from 200ft² per person to 120ft² per person. Had it not been for the four additional guests sleeping in the main shelter area, it wouldn't have been a problem. We generally kept a 24 hour watch consisting of two people, one watching the radiation and the other using the camera to survey the scene.

We found that the generators seldom ran; the PV panels and the wind turbine were providing more power than we needed. That was the difference from starting into preparedness having money as opposed to not having money. Well, money couldn't buy happiness. The other expression was money isn't the most important thing in the world, but it beat the heck out of whatever is in second place.

I was surrounded by my immediate family and hoped that Jan's family was ok. Her father, like mine, was into preparedness to an extent. On the other hand, that upscale neighborhood, Westchester County, made it difficult to keep a low profile. I wasn't sure they had a shelter or the things my family did. A minor targeting error would wipe out White Plains and Westchester County. I didn't plan on driving halfway across the country without a good reason to do so.

When I wrote to TOM to get the spreadsheet, I was curious about him being an auditor for the state of Iowa and asked a few questions. His reply included names of companies he'd 'heard of'. It was like a list of the Fortune 500. Had he done any audits in Westchester County? He dropped two names of companies he'd 'heard of' in the area Xerox and Gulf and Western. The latter is now Viacom and the former is still Xerox. He also knew of most of the major oil companies. I assumed he couldn't tell me the names of companies he audited, but was free to mention the names of companies he 'heard of'. He's probably there in Palmdale sitting on the fault line with his M1A in his lap daring the San Andreas to shake.

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"Time to check the livestock. Volunteers?"

Nearly every hand rose. I picked John and Rob who didn't raise their hands. We suited up and headed to the dome via the tunnel system. I paused and checked the hour meter on the generator and it wasn't due for an oil change. We continued to the dome and fed the livestock and moved the manure off to one side. The cow had dried up due to lack of attention. We added our masks, gloves and tape and went outside to close the stairwell cover and move some fire wood.

When we got back, I read the dosimeters and recorded the readings before I zeroed them. We had received doses of ~1R. Subsequent trips would be shorter and we'd get less until we went out to begin decontamination. We had a long discussion and agreed to limit our total dosage to 10R, if possible, before we started decontamination. We could limit our trips to the barn to twice per week.

That spreadsheet was deceiving unless you paid close attention. It was built to raise the number 7 to a power beginning at 7 raised to the 0.1 power and continuing until 7 was raised to the 10th power. Seven represented the number of elapsed hours and of course 7 to the 1st power is 7 hours. It really got deceptive between 7 to the 6th power and the 7th power. At the 6th power, the total time is 13.4 years and at the 7th power, the total

time is 94 years, a lifetime. For every increase of 7 by a factor, the radiation falls 90%. Therefore, at 7 hours it's 10% and at 7 to the second power, 49, it is 1% and at 7 to the third power, 343, it is 0.1%.

I thought back to the question Jan asked, "How far would you go to protect your family?" When she asked, we'd already taken significant steps. After she asked, we'd taken even more. Despite the primary fear during the Cold War coming true 25 years after the Cold War ended, we were ok for the moment. If the worst that happened was that we were a little crowded, it was ok. Ok because there is safety in numbers and we had added as many as 4 potential shooters for the bad times sure to come. Both John and I had accumulated massive stores of LTS food. The fuel tanks were topped off and additional stabilizer added. We had livestock; hence a source of protein and more of the 40 acres could be turned into garden using the existing equipment. The existing equipment would work, come what may, I had spares for everything.

Some say it's all about location and have a mantra, "Location, location, location; it's all about location." Well, when we picked the location, we had the right idea but didn't go far enough. While we could move, I wasn't certain that was the best idea either. For the moment, we weren't going anywhere, that much was certain. We had to let nature and physics work its magic under the 7/10 rule so we could leave the shelter in due course.

As the radiation level fell, the three of us pulled some plywood and 2x4s from the storage building and erected a temporary bedroom for the Simmons. It was a tight squeeze, but gave the shelter the feel of having more free space despite not really having more space.

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It was a full 9 months of shelter time for those that were going to risk going out to decontaminate. The well could supply sufficient water to the gasoline engine powered fire pump and we had one 1½" line that could reach the enclosed buildings. We scraped and hosed down the entire area, checked for residual radiation and did it again for spots we missed. This was November 2016 and there was snow on the ground hampering our efforts. We were persistent and prevailed.

In May of 2017, we slid back the metal cover over the shelter stairs and everyone was permitted to exit. The homes were warm and ready for occupancy. We turned out the herd of horses to allow them to run off the accumulated energy. The cattle, hogs and chickens were transferred from the dome barn to the Castlebrook barn. We could clean out the dome barn completely and after it aired out, use it for storage.

Until we had a feel for conditions above ground, everyone but our three children would go armed, including Lucy. That was one new hard rule and would not be relaxed until we had a better feel of the situation. Maybe Jan and I had read too much Patriot Fiction, but until we knew for sure, that was the way it was. Rob and his family lived in Hillsboro, the Jefferson County seat which was southwest of Barnhart. He was practically dying to

drive down and check on their home and see if any of the County government was intact. John and I let them go.

They were back later the same day; Hillsboro was an abandoned ghost town. They had loaded the rest of their clothes, his reloading equipment and emptied their pantry. He asked what it would take for them to be able to stay.

“Can you get the powder and primers and reload our brass?”

“Yes, I can drive over to Jefferson City, I know a guy.”

“We know people too, what does that have to do with anything?”

“He’s a major reloader and had tens of thousands of primers and more 8 pound cans of powder than you can imagine.”

“Will he just give it to you?”

No, but I have a little money.”

“FRNs aren’t worth the paper they’re printed on, how about gold or silver?”

“Oh right. I don’t have any gold or silver.”

“How about John and I ride over with you? I have a bit of gold and silver.”

“How much is a bit?”

“Rob, you sure don’t beat around the bush. The question asks more than you’re entitled to know. You know those two cabinets and the gun safe in the armory?”

“I saw them, yes.”

“They contain my gold and silver.”

“You’re rich?”

“Not as rich as I once was, but I have a fair amount of gold and silver that I accumulated on my own and acquired more when my parents died.”

“You’re right; it’s none of my business. Just bring what you think we may need and we’ll head for the Capital tomorrow.”

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“How much are you taking Seth?”

"I'm thinking 4 ounces of gold equally divided among the 4 denominations plus 2 rolls of dimes, quarters and halves and 10 Silver Eagles. I'll wear the fanny pack I have and keep it in there."

"That would be a fortune, unless I miss my guess."

"I haven't heard anything on the amateur bands indicating what the value of the precious metals might be. Besides, Rob overlooked something."

"What?"

"Bullets. I have used wheel weights we could melt down but no molds. So he either needs bullets or molds and sizing dies."

"You seem to know a lot about reloading for someone who have never done it."

"I can read John. I know the steps involved and that's all. I guess I could have purchased one of those fancy Dillon Precision progressive loaders and all the supplies. However, it was easier to just acquire the loaded cartridges and save the brass. I read in one story where survivors in a PAW traded 5 empties for one loaded and we have thousands of rounds of empty brass."

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"Do you have another suppressed rifle?"

"Are you sure you want one Rob? Suppressors are illegal in Missouri."

"Not for law enforcement."

"You can take my son's Super Match or my father's M21."

"The Super Match will be fine."

"What kind of reloading equipment was that you brought back?"

"Dillon. Don't have anything to reload .50, though. The guy we're going to see does, he sells reloading equipment in addition to the supplies and reloads himself. I know for a fact he has Hornady A-MAX ammo. It goes for around \$7.50 a round."

"Let me get you the rifle and improve my purchasing power."

We took back roads all the way from Barnhart to Jefferson City. Rob's friend lived outside of the city and his business was adjacent to his home. We pulled in and were greeted by an older man and some younger men we took to be his sons. Rob got out

and the man waived. The sons stood down and Rob explained the purpose of our trip and who we were. The older man waived indicating we should come up to the porch.

“I’m Seth Adams and this is my friend John Brown, no relation.”

“You can call me Dave, no last name. I understand you’re looking for reloading supplies, a press to reload .50 BMG and finished ammo.”

“That’s correct.”

“You do understand that cash is worthless.”

“We do and can pay in an acceptable form of currency.”

“That would be gold or silver.”

“Yes sir, I understand.”

“I can only spare 1,000 rounds of Hornady A-MAX at \$7.50 a round. I have more of the A-MAX bullets at \$3 each. I have all the powder and primers you can use. How many or much do you need?”

“I’ve never counted but we have 3 pails each of 5.56 and 7.62 brass. If you have it, I’d like enough powder and primers to reload 5,000 rounds of .50. We’ll need a bullet mold and sizing die, I have wheel weights.”

“What about pistol ammo?”

“We have about the same amount of pistol brass as we do rifle brass, 3 pails each of 9mm and .45acp.”

“What do you figure gold and silver are worth?”

“I don’t know \$2,000 for gold? Fifty to one ratio?”

“Gold is running about \$1,500 and the ratio is more like 60 to 1. Twelve ounces of gold will get you everything you want.”

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 6

“Does that include the .50 BMG press and dies?”

“What part of everything don’t you understand?”

“Sorry, I was just trying to clarify your offer. You have a deal.”

“Boys you get with Rob and start loading the stuff in his pickup. Seth was it? Let’s see the color of your gold.”

I swiveled the fanny pack around until it was in front of my belly and opened it, taking out a tube on one ounce Eagles. I counted out 12 and for the first time, Dave smiled.

“If I can get any more of those 750gr A-MAX bullets do you want them?”

“Sure. There are some things you can never have too much of.”

“You’re a prepper?”

“Who else survived what happened?”

“You’d be surprised. My family and I stayed in my shelter. A few other had access to other shelters. Being in the business I am, I always figured it was when and what, not if. I did my best to keep ample supplies on hand. Powder gets old after a while and I didn’t stock as much as I should have but I still have several pallets full. Come back when you need more. I’m not sure, but I think I know someone with a huge supply of the A-MAX bullets. He reloads for several .50 competitors. All I can do is ask.”

“I’d appreciate that.”

“I see you didn’t let the laws bother you too much.”

“What do you mean?”

“That’s a suppressed Ruger in the shoulder holster, a Surefire suppressor on the rifle, a suppressor in the nylon case on your belt for the pistol I presume. I doubt those hand grenades hanging off your web gear are the less than lethal variety. Where are the LAWs?”

“In the Suburban.”

“Some might call you a bonafide survivalist.”

“Stick and stones. And I guess we are under the original definition. You hear of anyone with a bolt action .50, I’d sure like to buy it.”

"It seems like you already have some .50s."

"We do, but I made an error. My dad's .50 was an AS-50 and with the suppressor, it won't cycle the action."

"I'll trade you even up for an AW-50."

"Which scope?"

"Zeiss."

"Magazines?"

"Ten."

"Deal. My rifle has Zeiss and ten magazines. Straight trade?"

"I'll throw in 100 rounds of A-MAX."

"We'll be back tomorrow."

"I'll be here."

"You did what?"

"I agreed to trade the AS-50 for an AW-50. Same optics and same number of magazines. We're both happy with the deal so it's a good deal. Plus he threw in another 100 rounds of A-MAX. You can use the AW-50 if you want Rob."

"Do you think it's possible for us to move our mobile home to your place?"

"I don't see why not."

"I want to get up to Oakville and get some of our things, radiation levels permitting."

"What do you want?"

"My generator and the spare parts, filters and what not. I'd also like to bring down our freezer."

"Since he's closer to Osage Bend than Jefferson City, I don't have a problem making the trip by myself. Why don't the two of you check on Oakville tomorrow while I go back to swap rifles and I go with you the following day to Hillsboro to get the mobile home? The well is a six inch pipe so we have ample water. The septic that was installed is large enough for 8 hookups."

“We’ll need a propane tank for his home.”

“Look around and see what you can find. If nothing else, we can hook Rob into my double tank.”

“How big is your propane tank?”

“I have twin 60,000-gallon tanks. That’s net 60k, not gross and I keep all of my tanks topped off.”

“What other tanks do you have?”

“Well...I have a 40,000-gallon diesel tank and a 10,000-gallon gasoline tank, both stabilized.”

“That \$150,000 of fuel.”

“Yes, if you don’t count the propane.”

“It makes me glad I didn’t look harder for those illegal weapons.”

“Yeah, adding in the propane at an average price of \$1.25 a gallon adds another \$75,000. And that doesn’t count the price of the PRI-D, PRI-G and PRI-Ocide or anti-gelling solution.”

“How much did he get for what he sold you?”

“One pound of gold at \$1,500 an ounce.”

“Eighteen thousand dollars! That’s highway robbery.”

“Maybe, but you can reload ammo to your heart’s content. I expect match grade ammo all the way.”

“Are you planning on a war?”

“We already had the war. Now we have to deal with the survivors and some may be of a mind to take rather than ask.”

“And you intend to be judge, jury and executioner?”

“If the circumstances dictate, yes.”

“That’s cold.”

“I have a wife, two daughters and a son to consider. You have a wife and daughter to consider. John has a wife and two daughters to consider. I’m sorry if you think my attitude is cold, but once a long time ago, my wife asked me how far I would go to protect my family. I said as far as it takes. That assumed that law and order still prevailed. So far there is no evidence it does. Consequently, if I have to be judge, jury and executioner I will be. I may not like it, but that may be my only choice.”

“Rob, I’m with Seth 100% on this.”

“This is going to be hard.”

“No doubt, but what choice do we have?”

“I guess I don’t know.”

o

The next day, I was forced to break my parent’s rule when Jan refused to allow me to go back to Jefferson City/Osage Bend alone. She had all of the firearms laid out on the kitchen table and the LAWs and hand grenades were in my Suburban. She had Dad’s AS-50 and had emptied the magazines. My Barrett model 99 was there with HEIAP and A-MAX. We left around 7am and were at Dave’s by 9.

“That the rifle?”

“Yes sir. Feel free to check it over. It was my fathers and I’ve only fired a few rounds through it since I got it. I don’t know how many rounds he fired.”

“From the looks of the bore, not many. Check out what I’m offering in trade.”

“Bore looks good, action is cleaned and oiled, looks good.”

“Your extra hundred rounds of A-MAX are in the box.”

“Thank you.”

“Boy, you put the ammo in his Suburban.”

“Hey Pa, you have to see this!”

“Whatcha got?”

“Look.”

“I’ll be damned, Raufoss?”

“That’s right Dave we have some.”

“Care to trade even up?”

“Thank you no. It was very difficult to come by.”

“I’ll go 2 for 1, A-MAX for Raufoss.”

“That generous but I don’t think so.”

“Three to one.”

“That’s not really fair, are you sure?”

“I have a lot of A-MAX and no Raufoss, four to one.”

I had to think. We had a lot of Raufoss considering. Raufoss sold for about the same price as A-MAX, \$7.50 a round ‘retail’. But 480 rounds of A-MAX could do more damage than 120 rounds of Raufoss. I was still thinking about his offer when...

“Five to one, last offer.”

“Are you sure you want to make that trade?”

“I said it.”

“Ok, done.”

About an hour after we returned, Rob and John pulled in towing a U-Haul trailer containing his generator and the generator parts were on the back of Rob’s pickup.

“I have to make one more trip to get our clothes and empty the pantry, but Sally will go with me. How did you make out in Jefferson City?”

“The rifle trade went off like clockwork. It’s what happened after that’s puzzling.”

“What happened after?”

“His son was putting my 100 rounds of A-MAX in the Suburban and saw the full can of Raufoss. He offered to trade it even up and I said it was hard to come by. He offered two for one and I said that was generous, but no thanks so he went to three to one. I got to thinking and told him that really wasn’t fair thinking that it was too much. He said he had a lot of A-MAX but no Raufoss and went to 4 to 1. That really set me to thinking, it was totally unequal. But, before I could say so, he went to 5 to 1, last offer. I asked if he was sure and he said he was. Bottom line I have the rifle that will use the suppressor and 600 rounds of A-MAX by trading off a rifle I never bought and one can of Raufoss.”

“You’re not Jewish are you?”

“Methodist.”

“You need help getting the rest of your things?”

“We can drop the trailer and use the Toolcat to unload the generator. We can pick up 2 more U-Haul trailers on the way up and the four of us can probably be done and back in less than 4 hours.”

“Are you ok with that Rob?”

“Sure, I’ll keep an eye on the place for you. Nice to hear someone finally got the better of Dave.”

“Let’s get it done and get on the road.”

When we stopped at U-Haul, we ‘entered’ the store and got 4 bundles of 1.5ft³ boxes, 2 tape guns and a six-pack of tape. We hooked up to 2 6x12 enclosed trailers and drove to John and Sally’s. We managed to get the clothing piled in the back seats of the pickup and Suburban and began loading boxes and moving them to the trailer. Once the pantry was emptied, we started on their stored food in the basement and shelter. It seems that they’d added more LTS food than could fit in a single trailer and had been forced to leave it behind. We also pulled his communications equipment and radiation equipment.

I could sort of understand John saying that they’d done their preps in pieces. The radiation equipment was from Texas, not North Dakota. Our medical supplies were more than they had. The only thing that they had a lot of was the food. It was a one year supply of what they regularly ate and a one year supply of LTS food for five in addition to the one year supply of LTS food they brought down when TSHTF. By the time everything was unloaded and put away, you had to suck in your gut to move around in the basement.

The next day, we headed to Hillsboro and our first stop was a place that sold plumbing and electrical supplies. We need electrical cable, cooper water lines, steel gas lines and PVC pipe for sewage. After we loaded up more than enough, we went to the trailer park. Their trailer was an older 14x70 like John and Sally’s and the new one on display was a 16x80 and had its wheels on. We located the trailer hauler and they moved their personal possession to the new trailer. The furniture in the display model was new junk and was left lying beside where the home had been parked and we moved their furniture to the home.

The trailer was the same manufacturer as Lucy’s and model number 8083, a three bedroom. As was typical with the singlewide mobile homes, the 2nd and 3rd bedrooms were

rather small, one being 9' wide and the other 11' wide. You had to step out into the hallway to change your mind. It took the full day to accomplish the move and fortunately when we got home, Lucy had prepared a large pot of beef stew using home canned beef and home canned vegetables plus fresh baked bread.

The following day, the ladies went to work in the greenhouse and we began to trench and add lines. The first connected was the propane followed by the water and late in the day, the line to the septic tank. By then, it was getting dark and we put off filling the trenches until the next day. It turned out that not filling the trenches may well have saved our lives.

It was, as they say, oh dark thirty when I heard an automatic weapon go off, sounding as if a full magazine had been fired. I grabbed my pants, shirt, boots, dressed quickly, grabbed my A3, sliding my arm through the shoulder loops of the ALICE gear. Over my business radio, our go to choice, I heard John.

"We have people inside the wire. I make out about 6 or 7, can't be sure. Make that 7, one guy is in the trench. He's probably the one who let go with the full magazine."

"Rog, this is Seth. I have my A3, where are they?"

"Near the dome."

"I see them," Rob replied.

"They're up to no good sneaking around at oh dark thirty on someone else's property with automatic weapons. If you can see 'em shoot 'em."

"For simple trespass?"

"No for what they intended to do, not what they've actually done. Wait I see one, hold on."

I let go a short burst and the critter went down. The idiot in the trench stuck up his head to see what was going down and I added him to my list. John could see some others and began to walk his fire through their ranks. Finally, Rob open up on one and took him out. That left only one. He threw down his rifle and raised his hands. Bad mistake, John cut him down.

"That was uncalled for."

"You're right; I probably could have gotten him with a single shot rather than a short burst."

"That isn't what I meant."

“I know exactly what you meant. What did you intend to do, arrest him and haul him to Hillsboro and lock him up? If you did that, you’d have to stay in Hillsboro to feed him, etc.”

“Relax John; it appears we got all of them.”

“Wait a minute while I get my Raptor and look around. Might have been more than 7.”

“Ok, it’s clear. We’d better check the bodies and collect their arms and ammunition.”

“What are we going to do with the bodies?”

“Well, they should all fit in the trenches.”

They were armed, to a man, with AKMs in 7.62x39mm and CZ-75s in 9mm. They averaged 8 rifle magazines and 4 pistol magazines apiece. We also collected three very nice knives, one Cold Steel Military Classic, one Randall model 1 with a 7” blade and one SOG Creed. The knives had been used because there was blood near the hilts.

Early the next morning, John and I dumped them in the septic line trench and filled all three trenches.

“Where did they go?”

“Where did who go?”

“The guys we shot last night!”

“Are you sure it wasn’t just a bad dream?”

“I’m sure; I’ve never owned a Randall knife before.”

“They’re buried. We did a bit better job of searching them before we dumped them. Here you go.”

“What is it?”

“Gold and silver coins and unless I miss my guess, investment grade diamonds.”

“But how...”

“There is blood on the hilts of our knives, have you checked yours?”

“You’re right, that’s blood. So, they were looters?”

“And/or murders and/or rapists. Who knows what they’ve done during the past few months. Nothing good, I’m certain. By the looks of their clothes they were gang members from St. Louis. I think the fact that they had the 9 mils and AKMs tends to support that. There was a vehicle down the road that we emptied out and shoved into the ditch. The trunk was full of booze.”

Rob stood there dumbstruck. He’d dealt with his share of criminals but times were far different than they were before the war. I believe the light bulb just came on. He took the morning and helped Maria and the kids get everything arranged and put away. After lunch he came to the house and asked where to set up the reloading equipment. The storage building was heated but very drafty. I suggested the shelter and offered to help him sort the brass.

While the brass was already sorted by caliber, it wasn’t sorted between primer type or civilian versus military. Berdan primed surplus was difficult to reload and I didn’t want to waste the time since we had so much boxer primed available. We could save it for later and maybe get new primers from Dave. So, I sorted the 5.56 and John sorted the 7.62. The following day, we sorted the .50BMG eliminating the few rounds of Berdan primed.

When Jan asked what happened I explained and asked, “Does that demonstrate how far I would go?”

It got me a hug and a kiss and she held on for all she was worth. I didn’t have anything to prove from my viewpoint, it had occurred earlier. Frankly, until I actually pulled the trigger on the first guy I wasn’t sure myself that I could do it. So that single act answered the question for both of us. I didn’t plan to make a habit out of shooting people unless the circumstances warranted it. But they had climbed the gate, I suppose; those blackberries should have kept them from coming over the fence and when they did that, all bets were off.

o

Has anyone ever given much consideration to our infrastructure? History Channel had a series, ‘Life after People’. It showed how our infrastructure would collapse without maintenance. My only complaint about the series was that it failed to recognize the current state of our infrastructure, before the war. You can imagine what it succumbed to after the war with a total lack of maintenance. We had bridges, dams, levees and highways that were nearly beyond use before and from the limited travel we’d done in the PAW, they were getting worse as grass began to protrude through cracks in the roads, bridges collapsed and levees failed when the Mississippi and Missouri and to a lesser extend the Ohio flooded.

There was more to the question of how far I would go than shooting someone to protect Jan and our children, or myself for that matter. Rob highlighted it when he called me judge, jury and executioner, but it went beyond that. None of us had more than a minimal amount of medical education, just the course John suggested we take. What if

someone got sick, or worse, shot? A gunshot wound by itself was bad enough, but the bullet usually drags trash into the wound path and that path has to be debrided by someone who know what he/she is doing.

Next, repairs to damaged blood vessels and tissue had to be made and an antibiotic selected and administered. Yes, we had some solutions to be used as blood bulkers, but we weren't set up for transfusions and no one wore dog tags with the SSN, DOB, blood type and religion. We had a limited supply of pain killers, but then what? I got out another pad and began yet another of my obsessive compulsive lists, including, doctor, dentist, nurse, medications, more bandages and so forth.

Hillsboro had been abandoned so we couldn't find medical personnel there. We might find a few drugs if the addicts hadn't cleaned out the drug store. We could try closer to St. Louis although any further north than Oakville would probably put us in a higher radiation area that would not be conducive to savaging trips.

I suppose I should tell you what kind of liquor they had in the trunk of their car. Popoff vodka, Jim Beam bourbon and a few bottles of Gordon gin. An eclectic collection of mostly cheap to mid-priced booze. I assume that either they didn't find any Bud or it was past date and unfit to drink. I don't drink stuff like that, my favorite Whiskey is single barrel Jack Daniels, Bombay Sapphire gin, a good blended Scotch, Chivas or better, Marker's Mark when I want bourbon, Stolichnaya or Absolute vodka and Jose Cuervo 1800 as a basis for a Golden Cadillac. But, we didn't drink much and kept what we had for company. My idea of a dry martini was 3 oz of gin over ice, tap the mixing glass twice with a bottle of vermouth, stain and serve with three king sized stuffed green olives. That's enough of that, we have chores to do.

o

They were simple chores, feed the livestock and move the manure. I had lifetime stud services for our Morgan's presuming I could run down the guy who made the promise. We'd need to find a boar, a bull and a few roosters so we could maintain or increase the number of livestock. I think I read somewhere that the average family eats about one chicken a week. We'd need 200 broilers and could turn a few into brood hens and butcher the brood hens whose production was falling off.

Lucy having her own trailer could work to our advantage if a criminal element made a second appearance. The bandits would have to assume that there were four families, minimum, and might decide to look for greener pastures. Or not. We decided to allow the garden to lay fallow for one season and limit our harvest to produce grown in the greenhouse. All the canning from the previous year came in handy.

With St. Louis still being hot in areas, our attempts at salvage were limited. None of us wanted to accumulate a large dose of radiation regardless of the time frame. That didn't mean we were idle, Jan and I could always use more wood for the fireplace and we could do our best to track down future sources of fuel. Once stabilized, the tankers

could be parked behind the garden until needed. We probably already had a lifetime supply of gasoline, but diesel was like bath tissue, especially when the sun wasn't shining and the wind fell off. We could burn anywhere from 1gph to 2.6gph per generator. On the other hand, we were getting enough power during daylight to meet our needs which tended to fall off dramatically after dark when everyone bedded down.

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 7

Rob was cranking out the reloaded ammo, and had started with the 5.56 because it was the first sorted. He claimed that he'd be ready to start on the 7.62 in 'a couple of weeks'. After that, he was going to try his hands at the .50 caliber which would go slowly because the loader wasn't progressive and he'd have to weigh each powder charge. He went on to say that once the rifle ammo was loaded, the pistol ammo would go quickly and he'd have both the 9mm and .45acp loaded 'in ten days or less'.

Rob was still a bit short with us when the subject of how we handled those uninvited callers came up. He was going to have to get glad in the clothes he got mad in.

Because there were multiple portions of the Mark Twain National Forest spread out all over Missouri, when we went look for firewood, we did it in section known as Big Piney. First off, it was the second closest to our location and second off, Big Piney was the home to Fort Leonard Wood and finally, it was pretty much a straight shot down I-44. We got the chain saws, axes, treated gas and other things we needed and drove a large tilt bed truck with a winch borrowed from a farm implement dealer down to collect some deadfalls or standing dead trees.

Loading the log sections wasn't as easy as we imagined it would be. We hauled four truck loads back and dumped them before parking the flatbed and driving back down to check out the Fort. We drove my Suburban pulling an empty U-Haul and half planned on getting a ten ton cargo truck with ten ton trailer if we found enough to be worth our while. Fort Leonard Wood and the US Army Maneuver Support Center (MANSCEN) is the home of the US Army Engineer, Military Police and Chemical Corps Schools, the Third Basic Combat Training Brigade, and Joint Training Detachments from the US Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force.

When I thought of Engineers, I thought of things that go boom. I sure wasn't interested in anything chemical, except more detection sets and maybe gas masks and or that new gadget, the ATNNA, the replacement for the Mark I NAAK. Maybe not, who is left to gas us? John was interested in finding a M1075 with trailer and Rob was discussing machine guns. If I read him right, he was mostly interested in the M240 and either the M2HB or its replacement, the M2A1. All I was thinking about was some C-4, caps, delayed detonators and some detonation cord. It would be a challenge because I knew squat about explosives and pyrotechnics.

Rob didn't find a M2A1, but he found a pair of the old standby Ma Deuce. He loaded those plus 2 M240Bs with one spare barrel each. He grabbed 4 of the Ma Deuce barrels saying that he would headspace each barrel and tag them. I didn't understand and asked him to explain. The barrel for the M240B was pre-headspaced and matched to the machine gun. The barrel for the M2HB wasn't and had to be manually headspaced and timing checked. However, some of the Marines he worked with who used the Ma Deuce would take the spare barrel or barrels and individually set the head space. That meant screwing the barrel all the way in and backing it out until it 'gauged right'. They

would then write down the number of turns out to achieve the correct headspace. In the brief lulls in a battle, it could mean precious time.

When we got home that night, he gave me a copy of FM 3-25-65 and said to read up on the machine gun. I read it alright and you could do that with the headspace, but timing was an entirely different question. So, I asked about that.

“The barrel head spacing and the timing are separate issues. Any barrel that won’t headspace between two clicks out and seven clicks out is discarded. If the go end of the gauge enters the T-slot freely to the center ring of the gauge, and the no-go end will not enter, headspace is correct. Timing is the adjustment of the weapon so that firing takes place when the recoiling parts are between .020 and .116 inch out of battery to prevent contact between the front end of the barrel extension and the trunnion block. Use the following procedures to set timing. Timing is a function the receiver and if it was good before the barrel swap, it should be good after. When there’s a lull, you can take time to confirm the timing. To change it, you remove the back plate like this. It has a 5 click range on this nut here, see it. Well, you crank it down and start backing out until it’s a go. Then you back it out 2 more clicks to get it into mid-range and replace the back plate. Reread that Field Manual and it will make some sense.”

So...the next question that came up was when to change barrels.

“We’ll be starting out with properly head spaced and timed machine guns. You should change the barrel every two cans or 200 rounds. The barrel will be hot, that’s why the asbestos gloves. However, don’t stop to change the barrel if the combat is ongoing. We might ruin a barrel, but we can get more. Just keep pouring fire until we win.”

“So why don’t we have to do that with the M240 Bravo?”

“The gun fires from an open bolt, not closed, and the barrels are headspaced at depot level. We don’t have the gauges and such to do that operation and frankly, I don’t know how. Somebody does but his name isn’t Rob Simmons.”

“Do you really think we’ll need machine guns?”

“You finally asked a question I’ve been waiting for. Put it like this, would you rather have them and not need them or need them and not have them?”

“Oh.”

“Now that we have those logs stacked and all of the military hardware we should need, how about looking for some more diesel?”

“Any idea where?”

“Best bet would be a fuel distributor, but the ones in St. Louis are probably hot. Second best would be to hit the truck stops on I-44. The downside of that is finding tankers. With no more fuel than you say we’re using, any we find will have to be stabilized and stored. Most of those fuel pumps use 3 phase electricity; do we have a 3 phase generator?”

“No.”

“So, now we have two problems, no empty tankers and no electricity. What do you want to do, go to Kohler, Wisconsin or Springfield, Missouri?”

“What’s in Springfield?”

“A Cummins Distributor.”

“How far is it to Wisconsin?”

“Close to 500 miles.”

“And Springfield?”

“About 225 miles.”

“Uh, probably Springfield.”

“I was hoping you’d say that.”

“Why?”

“Because we go right by the Fort. Might look around for an Mk-19?”

“What’s that?”

“A machine gun that shoots 40mm grenades.”

“I thought we passed up the M-203 because they were short range weapons.”

“We did. However, the MK-19 uses the 40x53mm grenade, not the 40x46mm grenade. The Mk-19 has an effective range of 1,500 meters while the M-203 grenade is only effective to 150 meters.”

“We have a fair number of M-16 style weapons, maybe we should get some of those M-203s and the short grenades.”

“I agree; it was you who didn’t want a short ranged weapon system.”

“I’m not always right, you know.”

“I know, but it’s nice to hear you admit it.”

“I’m not looking for a fight, but what’s with the attitude? Is it because I was less than forthcoming the first time you showed up?”

“No, that was to be expected. I think maybe I’m just a bit jealous about what all you have and it’s probably exasperated by your obvious wealth.”

“You can’t eat gold or silver Rob. It’s a tool, in a way, and can help you acquire things you may need but not have.”

“But look at you; you don’t even have to buy your utilities except for propane and you have enough of that for years and years.”

“We do, but we’re now running the house and three mobile homes on the tanks. John is on his own tank that I bought and put in but we’re using a lot of propane due the heaters, etc.”

“So we need diesel, propane and gasoline?”

“Diesel first followed by a propane tanker and eventually a gasoline tanker. Our vehicles are diesel and so is John’s SUV. The only gasoline operated vehicle is your truck. We could probably cut down every tree in Missouri with 10,000-gallons of gas.”

“Speaking of trees, it sure would be nice to have a fireplace.”

“We can look around for those high efficiency wood burning fireplaces. Some of them can heat your whole home. There are several manufacturers and we might find an outlet in a city the size of Springfield.”

After a trip to the Fort where we stocked up on M203s, a Mk-19 and a lot of the 46mm and belted 53mm grenades, we drove down to Springfield in the M1075 pulling the M1076 military trailer. The trailer was designed to be towed by the M1075 family of vehicles. It gave us a total load capacity 33 tons including the 16.5 tons each for the M1075 and M1076. It seems that ammo is heavy, especially ammo for the big guns like the M256 and the 155mm cannons.

Our problem wasn’t going to be weight as much as space. To cover that base, I drove my Suburban pulling the U-Haul trailer for things like the filters and such for the 3 phase generator. We might have to look around for a few drums of 15W-40 too. The three phase generator we found didn’t weigh any more than our Koehler’s; it just had a different alternator. It was diesel too and we’d passed a truck stop or three on our way down. As far as fireplaces went, there were 41 listings in the Yellow Pages. Plus, there were a fair number of people in Springfield.

The downside was I had to pay for the generator and filters. The upside was they loaded it and told us where we could find 15W-40. That turned out to be a fuel distributor, long abandoned. There were dozens of 5-gallon cans of PRI-G and PRI-D. There was also an empty tanker, a big one, maybe 10,000-gallons per tanker and it had two tanks. We added the PRI-D, I think that explained the five gallon cans, one per tank, and loaded the tankers.

We then started our search for those fireplaces. The one John had installed in our home was the 47" BIS Tradition High Efficiency Wood Burning Fireplace with Black Doors and Black Façade made by Security Fireplaces in Ohio. I wanted 3, one for each mobile home. It would be a bit much for John and Sally's 14x70 but about right for the larger singlewides. We found them at the 23rd place we checked. We loaded them in the back of M1075 with the smokestack called for and headed towards home.

Moving north on I-44, we grew a tail, a pair of Dodge Rams. Rob was driving the M1075, John was driving the tanker in the middle and I was tail end Charlie and I let both know about the two pickups. Rob said he'd slow down so we could pass him. I moved around him behind John and Rob started weaving slightly back and forth to keep the pickups from passing the trailer and truck. It only worked for about 5 miles but in that time, John and I got well ahead of the M1075 and pulled to the shoulder. Out came the A3s and we inserted HE grenades in the M-203s and then waited. The pickups were about abreast of the big truck, one on each side. We both fired at the one on the right side and it exploded before rolling over into the ditch.

We quickly reloaded and turned around to see if the other pickup was still in range. Rob had run it off the road into the left ditch and it was mired down in mud. Not quite in range, but that was easily corrected. We laid down suppressing fire, keeping their heads down until we were about 100 yards out. Both grenades hit about the same time and we must have hit the fuel tank, there was a huge fireball. After we were back in our vehicles, we came up on Rob, stopped up I-44 about a mile wearing an ear to ear grin and holding his carbine.

"Outstanding Rob, we laid down some suppressing fire and took out that second pickup too."

"Collect any weapons?"

"Didn't bother to look, the first pickup took two grenades and we must have hit the fuel tank on the second."

"Let's get back to your farm, we can discuss this later. Same vehicle order as we started out with me in the lead followed by the tanker and then the Suburban."

We pulled in about two hours later and parked the M1075 and trailer close to the mobile home and the tanker behind the dome barn. We went our separate ways and agreed to

distribute the fireplaces after spending some time with our families. I backed the U-Haul trailer into the storage building and went to check on Jan.

“Any trouble?”

“Some, good guys 2, bad guys 0.”

“What happened?”

“We did everything we planned on in Springfield, had to buy the generator and filters, and were headed home when I discovered we were being followed. Rob saved our bacon this time. Those 40mm grenades work as advertised.”

“Did you find the fireplaces you were looking for?”

“Yes, same make and model as ours. We’re going to move them to the mobile homes in a bit and John and Rob will install them.”

“That’s a big tanker.”

“Twin ten thousand, stabilized no less. There are a bunch of truck stops along I-44 and we should have all we’ll ever need.”

“Want something to eat?”

“I could use a bite.”

“Warmed up chili ok?”

“Sure. I’ll take a slice of the fresh bread too.”

Later we three gathered and moved the fireplaces and flues. Rob and John started to hook up Lucy’s first and I went to the storage building to unload the filters and stack them on empty sets of shelving. When it was empty, I emptied the items from the Suburban and pulled both out. I got our large garden cart and filled it with firewood, delivering a cartload to each of the mobile homes before I did the same for us. With the large truck and trailer which generally hauled palletized loads of cargo and ammunition we could probably haul most anything we would need. I noticed that they had Lucy’s fireplace in and had moved on to Robs.

“Anything I can do to help?”

“We’re on a roll, just stay out of the way. If you really want to do something, get everyone another load of firewood.”

“Sure.”

The next day, we started cutting the logs to length and splitting the sections into firewood. John took some of the spare materials from the storage building and built wood boxes for each trailer. We already had one, a decorative style. He loaded the two loads of firewood I'd delivered and hauled more until the wood boxes were full. Meanwhile, Rob and I had developed a tempo and the splitting was progressing nicely. We hadn't bothered to stack the firewood and when John finished his project, he used the cart to do that.

I hadn't realized how much firewood those logs contained, all I knew was they were big logs. A fair amount of the deadfalls and standing dead trees were old growth with diameters from 16" to almost 3'. One 16" section of a 3' tree contained approximately 8.9ft³ of firewood and one 8' log about 1/3+ cord (56.5ft³). And we had four truckloads of logs to cut and split. It was mixed oak and hickory and piled separately because I wanted hickory to burn in the log home fireplace. Some of the sections were so heavy we used the Toolcat and a chain to lift them into place in the splitter, slowing us slightly.

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"You look tired."

"I am tired. I didn't know some of these muscles existed. I'll ask you later to put on some Icy Hot, my back is killing me."

"How are you three doing on the firewood?"

"It's about half cut and split. Everyone has a fireplace and about a rick of firewood in the new firewood boxes John built."

"That's a lot isn't it?"

"Yes close to 43ft³. Enough so they wouldn't have to go out in a snowstorm for more wood; provided they keep the box full."

"Someone will do that, right? You don't expect Lucy to haul firewood do you?"

"I hadn't thought about. No, I suppose not. The three of us and the teens will probably take turns restocking them"

"Let the teens do it, it's healthy exercise. You guys should get them to help with stacking the firewood too."

"The primary problem is the size of the logs. We cut up some old growth and a few of the bottom logs run 36"."

"How do you move those after they're cut?"

“With the Toolcat and a chain. When I bought it, I looked at a larger unit that combined a motor, hydraulic pump and splitter. All you had to do was load in the log and it took it from there. I should have spent the extra money.”

“How did you get them on that truck in the first place?”

“It had a tilt bed and built in winch. We’d load a log using the winch, tilt the bed back flat and chain them down. Once that was done, we’d tilt it back up and pull on a second layer the same way and repeat the process until the truck was almost all the way down on the springs.”

“Well, that splitter is spilt milk, it’s too late for woulda, coulda, shoulda.”

“When we’ve been gone, has there been any sign of survivors from St. Louis looking for handouts or anything?”

“No. Don’t you think we’re far enough off the beaten path to have that happen?”

“I did until those 7 guys showed up a while back at oh dark thirty. Now, I’m not so sure. Add to that the trouble we had coming home from Springfield and it makes a person wonder.”

“What do we have, 2 medium and 2 heavy machine guns plus a grenade machine gun? We sure aren’t short on equipment. What we need are more people. Not just anyone, you understand, but people willing to work to keep the group fed and protected. How did Rob do on reloading the ammo?”

“He’s done with that chore. The problem with the .50 was he had to use a powder scale and weigh each charge. The nice thing about that is the ammo is Match grade.”

“Match grade kills them deader?”

“Match grade is the difference between a hit and a miss. At the longer ranges that’s important. I’ve been thinking that we should take advantage of the dome barn. It would be perfect to put in an emplacement for sniping or a good place to mount the Mk-19.”

“Can’t you do both? You could fill some sandbags and set up the grenade machine gun at the top and put in a couple more positions to the left and right.”

“I’ll talk to John and Rob about doing that after the firewood is done. How much are you getting from the greenhouse?”

“About enough to stay even. It allows us to rotate the home canned food but that’s all. I hope we can do an outside garden next year.”

“We should probably make it bigger. You said something about people. That would be easier to do if we had housing. The limit on the septic is 8 so we could add up to 4 more homes.”

“Do we have enough power for 4 more homes?”

“We have 30kw from the wind and started with 30kw on the cabin. The Castlebrook barn and the storage building each have about 45kw giving us 150kw total. Our battery bank isn't as large as it should be and we really could use more charge controllers and inverters. As it stands, we would have 18.75kw per home if we added 4 more. If you add in the two single phase generators, we have a total of 210kw of synchronized power or 26kw per home.”

“What's the radiation like in St. Louis?”

“Overall about 35-40mR. There are some hot spots, but we could avoid those. Why?”

“Could you find more homes there and furnish them?”

“Probably. We could look for fireplaces like the ones we brought back from Springfield too. I wouldn't mind finding a liquor warehouse, if I could. It might be nice to stock up on some more of the good stuff.”

“And after that, you'll want to go to Independence so you can load that Army truck and trailer with ammo?”

“I hadn't thought of that, but it's a good idea.”

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After dinner, I took a long hot shower and Jan liberally applied some Icy Hot to my aching back. I like her idea of getting the teens to help with the firewood. I felt a little better the next day, but the stiffness reminded me to discuss involving the teens with John and Rob.

“Jan suggested last night that we have the teens help us.”

“Melody and Danny will volunteer, I'll see to it.”

“So will Maria and Robert. They understand that it's my way or the highway.”

“Good. Now there's a second thing I wanted to discuss, our defenses.”

“You mean the lack thereof, don't you?”

“I suppose. My thought was that dome would be an ideal spot for the Mk-19. Actually, it was Jan’s idea. She suggested putting the Mk-19 in a position at the top and the two heavy machine guns in positions slightly lower on the dome.”

“One on each side so we could cover both the front and back?”

“If that’s the best way to do it, sure. One on the east and the other on the west?”

“That would work,” John responded. “We could use sandbags to build fighting positions, maybe three layers deep. That should stop anything but a .50 cal. Train the kids on the .50 calibers and one of us man the Mk-19. That would leave two of us free to snipe from any of the three positions.”

“Jan’s going to want a piece of this.”

“I’d guess that Sally should be considered a probable.”

“I’m not sure what to say about Maria. She’s tough and a good enough shot as far as that goes; if our kids are included, probably a probable.”

“I hadn’t thought about our 3 kids being involved Rob. If they were, Sally would be on the front line.”

“That makes it probably ten including the kids but excluding Cheryl, Lucy and our three. That brings me to the other thing that Jan and I discussed, more people. With the wind turbine and PV panels we’re generating about 150kw. The septic system handles 8 and the well would handle 8 without a problem. So, we could add 4 more homes.”

“Are you thinking of the 16x80 homes?”

“Yes, why?”

“Make it 5 and we’ll replace ours like Rob did theirs.”

“I don’t see why not. She brought up looking in the St. Louis area.”

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 8

“Most spots should have decayed now to a reasonable level. As long as we’re careful to avoid any hot spots, I’d go for that. But it still feels like looting.”

“Did you feel like we were looting in Springfield?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because when the property owners were there, you paid for the property.”

“But we didn’t steal the PRI products, the 20,000-gallons of diesel or the fireplaces?”

“No, they were abandoned.”

“Now, you get it.”

“Get what?”

“If I have to explain, you wouldn’t understand. Just keep in mind that civilization as we knew it is gone. We’re going to run into some good folks, some bad folks and some really ugly people in the coming days. We have families to provide for and protect. We’re going to be forced to salvage, whether we want to or not. I don’t approve of looting any more than you do Rob, that’s what I’ve been trying to explain. There is looting, scavenging and salvaging. Looting by my definition is taking something you may or may not need from someone who has it without due compensation. Scavenging is looking through the trash for discarded items and salvaging is more like saving something from destruction. Scrounging is looking for a handout and I’d place it before looting, but not do either. When cops go through your trash on the curb, that’s considered public property and it can be used against you, at least in some jurisdictions. Abandoned property will waste away unless you salvage and put it to good use, like a ship wreck. Do you understand?”

“Don’t get huffy.”

“I’m not. Do you understand?”

“Sorta.”

“Thank God for small miracles. Ok, we salvage the plumbing supplies first and get everything installed for four more trailers. Plus, we move any of John’s plumbing that needs it for his new trailer. Then, we locate 5 new 16x80 3 bedroom trailers, haul them here and get them hooked up. We can use the military truck and trailer to haul new furniture for the trailers and any new furniture anyone here may want. We’d better plan on getting

deep freezers while we're at it and raid the meat cutting department of a grocery store so we can butcher, cut and wrap our meat. We'll need butcher paper and tape plus extra band saw blades, a grinder, a tenderizer and a slicer. I want to locate a liquor distributor and pick up a few bottles of the good stuff before someone else gets it. And since we're hitting grocery stores, we'd better load up on bath tissue, feminine hygiene supplies and all the shelf stable foods we can find that we can't produce ourselves."

"Like what?"

"Salt, pepper, yeast, ketchup, mustard, oils and shortening, coffee, pasta, canned meats, rice, popcorn, pancake mix and a hundred things else I haven't mentioned. The point is, you get the idea so why don't you guys get Maria and Sally to make long shopping lists?"

"Darn, it's lunch time already."

"How about bringing your kids to help with the firewood after lunch?"

"And what will we do?"

"After we show them how, start setting up those defensive positions on the dome."

"I'd hoped you'd forgotten. Do you have sandbags?"

"Only 1,000 military surplus, will that be enough?"

"You bought something that wasn't new?"

"We bought a lot of things that weren't new. The sandbags are new and just surplus, production overruns I suppose."

"Man you thought of everything."

"I seriously doubt that. For example we don't have any body armor."

"The Sheriff has a bunch of level 2A."

"Not good enough, we need level 4."

"That stuff is heavy!"

"So?"

"Well...Fort Leonard Wood, here we come."

“Rob why don’t Robert and you make the trip while John and I go to St. Louis for the plumbing supplies?”

“Why not? When?”

“When the firewood is cut and stacked and the defenses established. We want ESAPIs and ESBI. I’ll settle for IOTVs if you can find them; they’re supposed to be better.” (ESAPI=Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts, ESBI=Enhanced Side Ballistic Plates, IOTV=Improved Outer Tactical Vest and not mentioned the USMC MTV=Modular Tactical Vest)

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“Do you have sand?”

“For what?”

“The sandbags.”

“No but I have 40 acres of dirt. I’ll use the Toolcat to get a bucket load and you can fill the sandbags. We can take turns so nobody feels left out.”

The teens and we had to take turns with the Toolcat, but we were finished with the sandbags first and climbed the dome to decide where to place the fighting positions. When we were satisfied with the locations we started hauling the dirt bags up two at a time. Rob marked a rough radius and John and I started placing bags. After about 6 trips, we took a break for some iced tea and started the next trips. We went back and forth, hauling and resting until the emplacements were completed and took one final rest before hauling up the 3 machine guns. We took up five cases for the Mk-19 and 20 cases each of the combat mix and practice mix for the .50s. The practice mix consists of 4 rounds of ball plus one round of tracer. The combat mix consists of 4 rounds of AP plus one round of APIT in an ammo can containing 100-round belts. The 40mm came in 48 round belts.

“Been a while since I hauled that many sandbags and it was uphill all the way. Let’s get the guns set and haul the ammo. Have any tarps we can cover them with?”

“In the storage building; I’ll get them once we have the three guns up here.”

“What’s on for tomorrow?”

“Robert and you go to the Fort and John and I will go to St. Louis. All the plumbing parts we need should be easy to find. I’ll grab a Yellow Pages and check for fireplaces and Mobile home dealers. We can also check the Yellow Pages for furniture stores. Oh, I forgot to tell you. Jan seems to think after we’re done with this project we’ll be heading to Kansas City.”

“What’s in KC?”

“It’s actually Independence; the Lake City ammo plant.”

“We have a lot of ammo already. We could burn through it quickly if word gets out about this place. The homes are visible from the highway and that gate won’t do much to deter determined attackers.”

“Let’s just get this done. Tomorrow, we’ll teach our wives how to operate the M2s and the Mk-19 and then set out for our destinations. We’ll make sure the guns are good to go and loaded with a belt of ammo, just in case.”

It was after lunch the next day when we departed. We took the CD V-700 Geiger counter. Hot spots were off scale and avoided but we got a Yellow Pages and located the plumbing supplies which was all we intended to get this trip. While we were at it, we got a few spools of electrical cable from an electrical supplier. We did check some mobile home dealers and found several 16x80 trailers. After we got home, we used yellow string and stakes to define the locations for the new trailers. We also marked where everything should come up to mate with trailer connections and started trenching.

Rob and Robert didn’t get back from the Fort until past 7. They ended up bringing back all they could find although there were no IOTVs to be had. They added a wide assortment of pouches and what not for the PALS webbing on the vests. The vests were new, sealed in plastic.

The teens had managed to work up to a pace matching ours so far as sawing, splitting and stacking the firewood went. They went one step further than we had gone, laying out a sheet of plywood by the back door of each dwelling and stacking the split wood there. They explained that meant they’d only have to haul it once.

At the close of business two days later, the trenches were in. The next day we began to run electric, water, gas and septic lines. Electricity was available above ground in a small utility building, where all of the synchronized electricity was available on massive panels. The others called it the Light House. We had lots of the PVC pipe and ran the electrical cable in separate ‘conduit’ in case of a water leak. The thing I liked about PVC was its ease of use. The water was plumbed in using flexible copper pipe and the following day, we refilled the trenches.

The following day was Sunday and we really needed the rest. I told them I’d feed the livestock and gather the eggs. I did that the first thing next morning and decided to turn on the radio to see how much amateur traffic there was. I started at 75 Meters, a favorite of many. It was very busy considering and I listened for a while before moving on to 40 then 20 Meters. I was trying to get a feel of what was out there, not announce our presence to the county. I noted frequencies I wanted to listen to again, and went back to the house to see what was for Sunday dinner.

Jan and Lucy had made another batch of fresh bread and there was a baking hen in the oven. Potatoes were peeled and soaking for mashed potatoes and she planned on frozen corn on the cob. The drippings from the hen would be the oil part of the roux to make chicken gravy. She said it would be ready around 1:00 so I got FM 3-22-68 and began to read up on the Mike 240 Bravo. The FM covered the M249, M60 and the M240 Bravo. Without having the gun available, it was confusing since the weapon had 8 parts groups.

“Dinner is ready.”

“Huh, I must have dozed off.”

“Yeah, like 30 minutes ago.”

“It has been a long week. Tomorrow we’ll go back to Hillsboro and pick up the trailer hauler and start moving the homes. Probably stop and outfit each with furniture before we bring it down. We can go later for the freezers, meat cutting equipment and additional supplies. Which reminds me; you need to make up a list of supplies we can salvage from St. Louis. Include anything we can’t produce ourselves. Spices, yeast, etc.”

It took all week to move the five trailers, fully equipped with everything except the fireplaces. We disconnected John and Sally’s old trailer and pulled it out of the way. We backed the new trailer into position and found we could get by with extending the lines, adding heat tape and insulation. We’d gotten rather adept at leveling the trailers. It was late evening before Sally and the kids finished moving their personal possessions. Saturday after chores, we returned to St. Louis and picked up 4 21ft³ upright freezers, 4 propane dryers and 4 washing machines.

We were worn to a frazzle and I half doubted one day of rest would be enough. We still had to move the appliances into place and hook them up, probably another full day. The teens could now lay out more plywood and stack firewood for each of the new homes and John had to move his fireplace from his old home to his new home. Lincoln may have freed the slaves, but he didn’t free teenagers. We looked upon it as them gaining important experience for the future.

On Monday, we finished up the trailers and helped John with his fireplace. On Tuesday, we took the list of locations in St. Louis that sold fireplaces and looked for more. Only one retailer sold the same model but he had several in stock and rather than return, we took all he had including the flues. Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to installing the fireplaces, building wood boxes and filling them. We planned on going grocery shopping on Friday and Saturday plus as much of next week as it took. There were Costco stores, Sam’s Club stores, Wal-Mart’s and any number of regular grocery stores.

In order to facilitate storage of the foodstuffs, we emptied all of the implements, Unimog and Toolcat from the storage building and covered them with tarps. One look told me

that we'd need another storage building, maybe something in a prefab steel building we could assemble. We had a cherry picker and a crane, and that would be half the battle. Thus, instead of salvaging food and supplies, we looked in the Yellow Pages for someone who sold steel buildings. We found three and decided to check them out on Friday.

Of the three, only one had a complete building in stock and it was a large building, 60x120, 1.5 stories high at the roof and a suitable roof pitch for the area. John said we'd need over 90 yards of concrete for the floor and footings and before we could put in those, we needed to grade a spot level and dig the footings. It wasn't like we didn't have the equipment although it was time consuming. He lined up 8 12-yard ready mix trucks while we were preparing the spot.

"We don't need to do any more to the concrete than a screed finish. And to do that, we're going to improvise."

"How?"

"Use 3 24' long 2x4s and fabricate a very long screed. I'll run the ready mix trucks and you two can move the screed."

"How long will this take?"

"Most of a day. Then we'll have time to haul that building down here and stack it until the concrete is cured in about 30 days. If we finish ahead of time, we'll go shopping starting with Costco. Let's get started first thing in the morning."

We ended up attaching a rope to the center of the long screed and had the kids help pulling it along. However, by evening, the footing and floor were in and leveled. John had washed out the mixers and dumped them into a ditch down the road a ways and we returned them the following day. The building dealer had a flatbed, and a tractor we got started after treating the fuel and replacing the batteries. It took us several days to haul the bundled and numbered sections down to the farm.

We then began our shopping extravaganza. The final plan would be to store anything related to food or supplies in the new building, excluding the canning operation. The storage building would be returned to its intended purpose of storing the machinery. The new building would have heat and cooling but no water or bathroom. An electrical panel would be mounted on the outside of the building to power the lighting.

During the time we worked to salvage, we accumulated a significant amount of food, bath tissue, paper towels and feminine supplies. I began to worry that the new building wouldn't be large enough, how high could we stack stuff? Ever resourceful, John offered one solution while we were working on the second Costco.

"What are you looking at?"

“That shelving. We didn’t completely empty it, but we came close. What say we finish emptying it and disassemble it? We need something in the new building to store stuff on.”

“I was worried about that but the solution was right here staring me in the face.”

“By the time we have it disassembled and transported, the concrete will be cured and we can start in on the building. When we finish up, we can assemble the shelving inside put in two propane heaters and borrow Costco’s fork lift. We’ll have to limit the width of the aisles but allow just enough room to get the folk lift in and turned to unload the pallets. We might pick up an additional row of shelving that way.”

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We began to assemble the building, one section at a time. It was pre-wired by the builder leaving one connection of the sections and wiring to make a complete building. It was also insulated and would be perfect for our food storage. One Sunday afternoon while Rob and I were resting, John went back to St. Louis and got a propane heater and an air conditioner. The cherry picker and the crane repaid their cost because without them, we would have never been able to do the roof. In due time, the building was completed and we went back to Costco and began to disassemble and haul the shelving.

Completing one section at a time and bringing one of two forklifts with us, we got the spacing between the shelving as close to minimum as possible. As we continued with our endeavor, the teens finished splitting firewood and distributing it to each home. They then turned to moving the goods we brought back together with what was stored in the storage building under the direction of Jan, Sally and Maria. When we were well ahead of their efforts, we began to salvage again.

Our efforts went back and forth between salvaging and adding shelving until there was no more room for shelving. We stopped and set up an area in the storage building where we could process the meat we butchered. Rob went back to Jefferson City to see Dave and pick up more components if he had them. He had those A-MAX bullets and more powder and primers. Rob told us he mentioned the trip to Independence to Dave and Dave laughed saying, “good luck.”

Kansas City had been hit by 3 warheads, one to the west side, a second at the Kansas side of the bridge and the third in Independence near the plant. Dave had already been there and there and said there was little left to salvage. Rob had also visited with some possible candidates for residence and could tell us what he knew of them. If it warranted a trip, they could come to the farm or we could go to see them. One was a Missouri Highway Patrolman and the other two he knew from the Corps. One of the Marines worked in the meat department of a grocery store before the war. He had also worked in a Kansas City slaughterhouse, a separate skill from meat cutting.

The other Marine had been Rob's battle buddy and he trusted him with his life. The Cop had gained some notoriety over his skill as the sharpshooter on a SWAT team. That still left one vacancy assuming we invited all three of the men and their families. We'd do that as soon as we finished up the salvaging and organizing of the goods.

We arranged for them to come to us, one family at a time. We started with the Cop. Warren Hershey was in his late 30s, married to Stella with two children in high school, Tammy and Shelia. He checked us out as carefully as we checked him out on the surface. He left us with a feeling of belonging and after a quick discussion, we extended an invitation. Stella and he promptly accepted. He looked at the 4 trailers, picked one and said they'd be back within the week with their possessions. I explained a thing or two about the defense of the farm and some of the tools available. Warren said he didn't have single action firearms, but they'd have them when they came back. Stella and the kids had 9mm pistols, 5.56 rifles and 20-gauge shotguns. He had a National Match M1A, a Kimber .45 and police model Remington 870.

Our next interview was with the meat cutter, Jerry Lake. His wife Veronica and their three kids ranging in age for 12 to 19 were nearly an instant hit. They were open and friendly. In the aftermath of the war, he'd immediately began salvaging to acquire what he thought it would take to make it long term. He said while it wasn't his first thought, up arming was close to his top priority, thinking of the safety of his family. He went through a list of acquisitions and we just shook our heads. They got invited.

Rob's battle buddy was last. His name was Jesse Spencer but he went by Buddy. His wife Elaine and their two children, Samantha and Thomas were a bit standoffish. He explained that she had erected a shell to deal with the aftermath of the war and was emerging, be it slowly. He felt that if she could be surrounded with women her own age it would draw her out more. If we could locate her sister and husband and move them here, it would be all it would take; her sister and she were close.

The sister and brother-in-law lived in Springfield and he'd never been able to put together enough fuel to make the trip. We offered him the fuel, gasoline or diesel, so he could track them down. When he found them, he should get them to come to the farm so we could meet them. Until then, a final decision on their invite was placed on hold.

"What do you think?"

"Rob, your fighting buddy is a good man. I'm leery of his wife for the moment. She seems to have more influence over their children than he does."

"You wouldn't be saying that if you knew her before the war."

"Maybe not; we're not a mental health institute. We don't have the time or resources to spend on one person and help them get their head unstuck. I think I speak for all of us when I say that we're keeping an open mind and waiting to see if her sister can bring her around. If she can't, I'm inclined to not make an invitation."

Rob got in a huff and stormed off, an occasional behavior. John spoke to him and essentially told him the same thing. Maybe it was how he said it, Rob backed down. Within two weeks the Hershey and Lake families were in residence and with the weather getting colder, we began to give some thought to butchering.

It was another week before Buddy showed up with his family, Elaine's sister and brother-in-law. Elaine was bubbly and the kids were more open now that they were with their cousins. Elaine's sister Sharon was an instant hit, much more than Elaine had been. Her husband James was a professional, a lawyer.

What's better than a dead lawyer at the bottom of the ocean? Seven-hundred fifty dead lawyers at the bottom of the ocean. James seemed friendly enough and I didn't waste any time, I wanted to know where he stood on the issue of firearms, especially in a PAW. Air, food, shelter and water may be the most important things, but you may need firearms to keep them. He didn't really look like a lawyer, dressed in blue jeans a plaid shirt and wearing a light jacket.

I just flat out asked. He smiled, stood and lifted away the jacket to reveal a pistol. Learned to shoot, he said, while he was a JAG. Grabbed Sharon's purse and pulled out her pistol, a compact Glock. Said he didn't know much about farming but had proved his learning ability by becoming a lawyer and could be taught to do most anything. It finally came down to Elaine. John and Sally, Jan and I got together and decided, without a word to Rob, we'd confront her and see if she was back to her 'normal' self or not. We told Buddy that the four of us wanted to speak with her alone; it would be the deciding factor.

After some hesitation he agreed and we four sat down at the dining room table to have a Q&A with Elaine. We started off sort of gentle like and moved on to more intense questioning. She never flustered once and actually gave well thought out answers. We all were nodding our heads indicating a positive outcome when Rob made an appearance.

"What do you think you're doing?"

"It's done and decided."

"Now see here..."

"Sit down and shut up Rob. This is my place and I've about got a belly full of your attitude. We four decided to have a little Q&A session with Elaine. We'd already decided that the sister and brother-in-law would fit in and so would Buddy. Hence it came down to a question about Elaine. Buddy agreed that we could visit with her and she never batted an eye at any of our questions. We're agreed to invited Buddy and Elaine, James and Sharon and their families. We knew how you felt and decided that you couldn't con-

sider the question without a jaundiced eye because of your relationship to Buddy. Do you want to be the one to tell them?"

"Sorry, I just..."

"Save it, we understand."

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We had no more room at the moment to store anything else. There were 4 empty and 4 partially empty freezers to be filled. Jerry quickly erected a smoke house to smoke the bacon and hams and selected hickory logs. Around the first of November, we started butchering, hogs first followed by beef. We butchered 8 hogs, one per family and passed out the wrapped meat as it was cut and wrapped. The bacon and hams had been brined and were smoking away in the smoke house. We started in on the beef, allocating one side per family. How it was actually distributed would depend on how much empty freezer space each family had. Ham and bacon would probably be in short supply unless we butchered extra hogs and smoked the hams, bacon, picnics and loins and made the rest into sausage.

After the beef was slaughtered and hanging to age, two more hogs were slaughtered for bacon, ham, smoked picnic, Canadian bacon and sausage. The beef still needed some aging and we next butchered fryers and baking hens, finally turning to the sides of beef. While Jerry handled the main cutting, he had us boning out the small pieces of beef being collected in a large pan for ground beef. He was adding the beef shanks, neck roasts, assorted trimmings and even the flank steaks. His practiced eye told him it was about 15% fat, ground chuck. Ground round is 12% fat and ground sirloin is 10%. Lean ground beef is 22% and hamburger is 30%, he explained. If we wanted anything leaner than ground chuck, we needed boneless beef, aka a dairy cow, or we could forego the Swiss steak cuts and add only the meat.

We left the decisions up to Jerry and he was going out of his way to see that we were getting carefully trimmed cuts. The first hams and bacon were removed from the smokehouse and the brined meat from the other pair of hogs added. The sausage had been ground and packaged and he was getting close to finishing the beef. Meanwhile, we'd located the bull and bred both cows. In the process, we'd located some beef out in a pasture that only needed finishing before being processed. The guy with the stallion serviced our mares and offered us four more because he couldn't arrange enough feed.

I didn't give that a thought; we now had 8 families and could use all of the riding horses we could get. When I told him that, he offered to let me buy him out, if I could come up with some PMs. We negotiated for a bit, settled on a price including all tack, saddles, etc., hay and grain. We now had a stallion and could breed as needed. The only thing we were now short of was space. A small herd of cattle, a larger herd of horses and a boar and 4 sows would be cramped on the remaining 30 acres.

How Far Would You Go – Chapter 9

Thirty acres? Where did you think the extra land came from for the dome barn, the new storage building, the larger garden and the berm behind which we were storing the tankers? We'd spread out some and the homestead now covered 10 acres. The land to the east was an 80 acre field and we installed a gate and made repairs where needed to the fence. We got the gate by removing it from the road side of the fence and moving it. New fencing was installed to replace the gate and we dug out the driveway into the field in an attempt to eliminate temptation.

We had snow by mid-November and actually held Thanksgiving dinner in the log storage building. The foods for the most part were prepared at home and brought to the building with the wood stove keeping the hot dishes hot and the beverage cooler we'd liberated from a Casey's keeping the cold food cold. We had 4 8' folding tables set up end to end and almost needed radios to communicate from the head of the table to the foot of the table.

Buddy volunteered to say grace and he stood and gave a heart wrenching prayer of Thanksgiving, hope for a brighter future and God's help in our future struggles to recover from the worst mankind had thrown our way. We had drawn straws and one person had been fed early and was standing duty at the Mk-19 emplacement.

"This is position one, we have company."

"Details?"

"Five vehicles, all large cab pickups. Men are dismounting and are carrying rifles."

"Be careful and load the three machine guns, we're on our way."

"Are those guns ready to go?"

"Headspaced and timed them last week, they're good to go."

"Ok, those with .50s grab them and move to the emplacements up the backside of the dome. Machine gunners to their assigned spots. El Degüello! Jan, have one of the kids put the recording from Rio Bravo on the outside speaker system on continuous play. Riflemen find cover and back up the main gunners."

"Not bad for a civilian."

"Right, we'll see."

Where did you learn the El Degüello bit?"

"First from Rio Bravo and then from The Alamo."

“Let’s hope they’re movie fans.”

I was hoping that even if they couldn’t identify the song at first, when it repeated over and over, they would become disconcerted. I’d had enough of several things, not limited to Rob’s belly aching. We’d left much more in St. Louis than we’d taken, all they had to do was look around. Their force could number anywhere from 20 with 4 per pickup, to 30 with 6 per pickup.

We waited for them to move into rifle range, hoping someone would call out, “Hello the House.” They continued down the road to the gate and started to climb over. One of the riflemen providing ground support fired a single shot, dropping the person. They hunkered down and tried to open the gate. It was easy to open if you had a remote control, otherwise forget it. It used a Stanley garage door opener with about 10,000 possible settings and had wire mesh/perforated plate to prevent anyone from simply slipping through.

Both M2s open up with short bursts, a pause and another short burst. The Mk-19 gunner turned his attention to the pickups and started firing short bursts into the pickups. If any escaped, they’d be walking. Because they had reasonable concealment it took some time to engage the men. They fell one by one until the last few tried to disengage and began running. My order of El Degüello served as much to try and frighten the attackers as to remind the defenders of the order. The attackers didn’t get off more than a dozen poorly aimed shots, while our machine gunners were still on their first belt and all the attackers were down.

We left them lay and went back to finish Thanksgiving dinner. It took a few minutes to regain our appetites, but we finished off both hams. The last of the turkeys were a fading memory leaving us a choice of a standing rib roast or hams. Except for our choice of meat, it was just like any previous Thanksgiving with ham gravy instead of turkey gravy, stove top stuffing, smashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, various salads and pumpkin pie for desert.

We lingered, not looking forward to what lay ahead, gathering the bodies and disposing of them, pushing the pickups into the ditch, etc. We came out when position one radioed it was beginning to snow. Our first task was to search the bodies, collecting firearms, ammunition, magazines and then going through their pockets and loading them in the back of Rob’s pickup. John took the Toolcat and cleared the road. After that, he went into the field across the road and began digging a mass grave. When he finished, the bodies were tossed into the grave and the hole refilled. We took the weapons, etc. to the storage building and laid them out on the cleared tables.

For the most part, the firearms were well cared for. The most popular handgun was the M1911; a majority of the rifles were 7.62 autoloaders with a few autoloaders in 5.56. There were an assortment of hunting knives, first aid kits and even 4 M-40 gas masks. We cleaned the firearms, some only required a bore snake and a touch of CLP, and

moved them to the armory. It was the first time many of the new residents had seen the armory and they were impressed.

“You could fight World War III with what you have.”

“We had WW III and everyone lost. Einstein was wrong about WW IV, we’ll be using military hardware.”

“No sticks and stones, huh?”

He wrote Harry Truman and said, *I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.* The facts outweigh his assumptions. It seems obvious his assumption was WW III would be fought with nuclear weapons, as it was; but only because they’re generally more effective than other weapons of mass destruction. A biological weapon would have been a good second choice. Protecting your own population becomes problematical because if you start vaccinating everyone, the opposition finds out and makes a preemptive strike.”

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We settled in for the winter. With Christmas coming and growing teens and younger children, it would mostly be a clothes Christmas. It would also be the time to advance some of the children from his/her shooting piece to something more adult. An example might be giving out a 12-gauge to replace a 20-gauge or a larger caliber rifle to replace a rimfire rifle.

When we shopped for our three, we wanted western clothing. It came in all sizes these days and they made things like rain slickers and drovers coats all the way down to children’s sizes. Then there was that important first real hat, a straw hat for summer and a felt hat for winter. We went two couples at a time with one maintaining security while the other couple shopped. Many of the residents wanted a ‘family gift’. A family gift is something of practical value for everyday use and should not be confused with a personal gift.

The most popular family gifts turned out to be deep freezers. The 21ft³ were a little short on space so they added a second 21ft³ to have more room for home frozen foods. The second freezers left the mobile homes a little crowded and ended up in the storage building with a label denoting which family it belonged to.

I finally had a chance to locate a liquor distributor and carefully selected various cases to store in our basement. It was all of top quality and ranged from tequila to vodka to gin to whiskey to bourbon to scotch and included many bottles of the after dinner drinks, B&B, Drambuie, etc. The after dinner drinks were a lifetime supply and I adjusted the other liquors and mixes accordingly. We all had our own eccentricities and mine was drinking only high quality liquors. Jan and I seldom drank and before we both quit teach-

ing, we didn't keep liquor in the house. We would have a cocktail or an after dinner drink when we ate out.

There wasn't that much snow this winter and we drove back to Big Piney and dropped more standing dead trees. We had brought the Unimog with the crane to set the logs on a flatbed semi-trailer and actually had two trailers running for a while. These trees were slightly smaller, running from 12" to about 24". After a month of cutting, we called it quits and stayed home sawing, splitting and stacking. We gave the teens a break, sort of; all they had to do was stack. We helped them because with more than 6 of us doing the sawing and splitting, we were tripping over each other's feet. Two teams sawed and one team split.

When we finished up the firewood we spread the manure on a 160 acre field across the road and plowed it in. There wasn't enough for all 160 acres so we were only going to plant 80 acres of corn and divided the other 80 among various crops. We did 40 acres of hay and 10 acres each of crops for our consumption, 2 kinds of wheat, oats, and five acres each of potatoes and sweet corn. The outside garden was doubled in size and we planted using heirloom seeds for the first time. All the empty jars were gathered up and washed a second time. They would be sterilized right before the food was added. That warranted a trip to St. Louis looking for jars and lids. Well we probably had plenty, a few more couldn't hurt.

We stayed on the farm throughout the summer, only returning after the harvest. There was a MNG roadblock on I-55 right around the junction with I-270. It was about time! We were armed to the teeth as we always were when we drove up to St. Louis. The Corporal appeared not to be comfortable with that.

"You'll have to surrender your firearms."

"Sez who?"

"The President. He issued an Executive Order."

"If he wants my guns, he can pry them from my cold dead hands."

"I can oblige you, if you wish."

"The other 4 vehicles? We're together and are of one mind. You might have your hands full Corporal."

While I engaged him in conversation, I slipped the Ruger Mark II from my shoulder holster and was holding it just under my jacket. If he persisted, I intended to give him a third eye, be it small. But the others piled out of their vehicles, weapons in hand and he came to realize that he had a problem. We were all wearing Interceptor armor and armed far better than his squad.

“I’d better call this in.”

“No problem, we’ll wait.”

He stepped off and got on a radio in one of the two Hummers. After a moment, he came back.

“The Sergeant of the Guard will be here shortly.” (With more people, no doubt.)

I gave an innocent waive of my hand and our people spread out into hasty fighting positions. The Corporal got a little green around the gills. Pretty soon, two more Hummers appeared and a Staff Sergeant dismounted along with everyone in the vehicles except the gunners.

“What’s this I hear that you refuse to disarm?”

“Just that, you cannot have our firearms.”

“Why not?”

“Look, it’s simple. Since the war, we’ve been forced to defend ourselves more than once. Our farm has been attacked more than once. We made a trip to Springfield and bought and paid for a generator and were attacked on the way home. The Supreme Court in Heller made two things clear, the right to keep and bear arms is an individual right and a person has a right to self-protection. I can bring up our lawyer to explain it if you need a better explanation.”

“You have a lawyer with you?”

“He’s a member of our small community.”

“Where is your small community located?”

“South a ways on I-55 and then west a ways. If you come down there, you’ll need an Abrams or a Bradley.”

“And just exactly where is this place?”

“You don’t have a need to know. But, if you happen upon it, be aware that we have some real firepower.”

“Ok here’s the deal. I’ll check with the Platoon Commander and if he says so, you can keep your arms. However, you may not remove them from your vehicles.”

That’s not going to work because one of our members is a Law Enforcement Officer, a Deputy Sheriff of Jefferson County.”

“If he’s wearing his badge and has appropriate ID, we’ll make an exception. You need to stop by this location and register before you move around the city.”

The location was a High School Auditorium and we headed there. We already had a plan in mind to overcome the military because they made exceptions. We were finger printed, photographed and information noted from a driver’s license. Finally, we were issued with a card that had our photo on back, a signature line and a registration number and identifying data on the front.

After all that, we headed to the stores for more Christmas shopping, but the stores were locked up and guarded. One of the guards explained that until they had an inventory and determined a value for the goods, there would be no shopping. We left and drove down to Hillsboro. Rob dug around and found the Sheriff’s spare badge and enough Deputies badges for all of the adults. He made up the IDs using the Department’s equipment and swore us in. There’s more than one way to skin a cat.

Was it legal? “Iffy at best,” James claimed.

Anyway, we shopped in Hillsboro instead of St. Louis. The selection wasn’t as good but we found what we wanted. One thing we had planned on getting in St. Louis wasn’t available in Hillsboro, replacements for our expired meds. The MNG probably had them from the Strategic National Supply. The CDC stores the medicines in about a dozen locations under the protection of armed guards. When they’re transferred, the shipments are guarded by US Marshals. Those locations were classified.

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We must have given them too accurate directions and/or they noted that Rob was a Jefferson County Deputy. Either way, The Staff Sergeant showed up with his squad not long after. At least he stopped out front and yelled out, “Hello the house.” We responded as one, assuming our defensive positions before we replied.

“Hello yourself Sergeant. I thought we told you not to come looking.”

“I’ve got a job to do making sure everyone in the surrounding Counties are notified about the registration process.”

“We’ll you might as well come in for coffee.”

“You have coffee?”

“We have coffee, cigarettes and liquor, a little of the cheap stuff and more of the expensive stuff. We had most of our things before the war but have done a little salvaging. As far as we’ve been able to determine, we’re all the survivors left in Jefferson County.

Hillsboro is abandoned and the only farmer we ran across sold us his herd of horses and feed and took off for parts unknown." Most commuted to St. Louis to work."

Have you checked all the communities and farms?"

"I'm not a census taker, but we did check Hillsboro. We voted to promote Rob to Acting Sheriff and he deputized all of the adults."

"End run on the Law enforcement exception?"

"That's a fact. We're all acting deputies."

"What kind of trouble have you had?"

"The first time was when 7 guys tried to sneak in around oh dark thrty. One guy fell in a trench and fired a full magazine from an AKM. Bad guys zero, residents seven. Later, we made a trip to Springfield to buy or salvage a 3 phase generator and a few other things. Bad guys zero, residents four. This past Thanksgiving, we were attacked during Thanksgiving dinner. The observer we left out on watch called it in. Bad guys zero, residents 20."

"How did you manage that?"

"Look at that dome and tell me what you see."

"Firepower and plenty of it."

"We also have two Mike 240 Bravos, just in case."

"Anything else?"

"Maybe, maybe not. We do have a lot of .50 caliber sniper rifles and the firearms we liberated from the attackers."

"Where did you get that stuff?"

"The military hardware came from the Fort. We already owned the rest."

"Well, you're registered and we won't intrude in local matters. Coffee ready?"

"All we have is Folgers and if there wasn't enough, Jan would have started a new pot"

"As you might imagine, the Missouri National Guard doesn't stock a lot of coffee, and I do miss my coffee."

“There are fresh cinnamon rolls fresh out of the oven. Have your soldiers come in and get a roll and a mug of coffee Sergeant,” Jan suggested.

“Thank you.”

The Sergeant, whose name tag said Collins, talked briefly to the squad and they lined up, coming in one at a time for a roll and coffee. Jan started the second urn perking. Lucy was rolling out enough dough for a second pan of rolls, but they would take a while. This time, instead of baking the bread first, they baked the rolls first and some of the bread was relegated to more rolls.

“What do you hear from around the country Sergeant Collins?”

“Not much good news I’m afraid. The President was airborne when the attack came and managed to get to Peterson. He’s been in the Mountain since. Communications were totally messed up and when he tried to activate the Guards, the Governors all refused. It took us quite some time to get organized for various reasons. We had to get medicines from the SNS, had to parcel out the remaining arms and munitions, and so forth. I’d like to have my truck and trailer back if you wouldn’t mind. That might go a long way towards establishing a basis of cooperation between you people and the Guard.”

“Want the weapons too?”

“Eventually. At the moment we have enough.”

“We took the stuff because we were on our own, protection wise.”

“Don’t get your water hot, I understand. Once we get a better handle on things, we may need them is all.”

“I heard they dropped 3 on Kansas City.”

“Who told you that?”

“An acquaintance from Jefferson City.”

“He’s either mistaken or a liar. One weapon hit KC, on the west side of town. Damage to the Missouri side of the river was limited. Is your acquaintance by chance an ammo dealer?”

“Could be.”

“Well, not any more. We caught him coming out of Lake City with two semi loads of ammo. They’ve been detained.”

“Not shot?”

“No, they’re perfectly healthy, just a little hungry. Rations are a bit tight and we’re giving them one MRE per day and all the water they want.”

“Any chance of getting some of those medications you mentioned?”

“What do you need?”

“Normal saline and D5W. Epinephrine. What we have is way out of date.”

“I’ll talk to my medical people. I don’t know about the first two, but I do know that epinephrine is only good for a year. We’ll do what we can. One of your people a doctor?”

“No, we’ve had some training though. Plus some of our ex-military were Combat Life-savers.”

“Had anyone get hurt?”

“Not so far. We’re sneaky bastards and know the difference between concealment and cover. Plus with the military hardware we don’t have to let them get too close.”

“Well, I suppose we’d best get going. We’ll take the truck and trailer. Ma’am, thank you for the coffee and rolls.”

“Here Sergeant,” Jan said handing him 2 cans of Folgers, “I’m sure you can find a coffee pot.”

“Yes Ma’am. Thank you!”

I was rather surprised when Sgt. Collins didn’t say much about the Deputy Sheriff ruse. We were, for all intents and purposes, temporary Deputy Sheriff’s and Rob had been elected to be the Sheriff by us. It might fly until elections could be held. I surmised that when the warhead exploded over St. Louis the population of Hillsboro bolted to get away from the threat of radiation; which meant they’d be back, eventually.

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While all nuclear detonations produce EMP, it’s a local condition unless the device is detonated above 10km, about 33,000 feet. However, that eliminates most of the ground damage and air bursts tend to be below 5,000 feet. With nuclear weapons, the air burst – usually several hundred to a few thousand feet in the air – allows the shockwave of the explosion to destroy the largest possible number of buildings, military units or vehicles, etc. This also minimizes the generation of irradiated soil and other debris (fallout) by keeping the fireball from touching the ground, limiting the amount of additional debris that is vaporized and drawn up in the radioactive debris cloud.

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The reason I guessed that about Hillsboro was that you couldn't fit all 1,800 residents into the basement of the government buildings the community boasted. The County, as a whole, had a much larger population as part of the St. Louis Metro population area. And no, not everyone in St. Louis became a fatality. The loss of life was high, but no more so that other large cities targeted during the war. What they lacked was organization, perhaps our greatest strength. When we could, we set about salvaging with a vengeance, securing our long term needs.

After the initial salvaging, we only went when we needed to, like shopping for Christmas presents. We could pay, provided there was someone there who had legitimate claim to the property we often ended up just taking. With the MNG here, we expected things would change, both in the near and long term. An Army medic came down and checked through our medical supplies and asked how we had acquired some of them. It was no secret so we told him and explained why we had them. He replaced our epinephrine and said when the saline and D5W expired, they would also be replaced, if they had replacements available.

The presence of the Guard in St. Louis changed some things and not necessarily for the better. While the Guard monitored certain amateur frequencies which they made known, their response time left something to be desired. Do you remember the line out of Top Gun? *Bullshit ten minutes! This thing will be over in two minutes! Get on it!* They didn't have a go team and when an emergency radio call came in, they had to find a couple of Hummers, or more, round up the troops, check ammo and what not and only then strike out to help.

Like Stinger said in the movie, sometimes an engagement was over almost before it started. We were always armed with a pistol and had a long arm within arm's reach. Any idiot stupid enough to attack us only had the amount of time it took for us to get to the heavy weapons before their goose was cooked. And, I enforced the rule of *El Degüello*, No Quarter. The Spanish phrase actually referred to throat slitting, but the result was the same in the end and a bullet quicker. We might not always have time to play the bugle call although by now we didn't need to for our part.

Fortunately, we were only attacked one more time. It was a larger force, 34 by the body count, and the MNG actually arrived while we were administering the *Coup de Grâce* to the last survivor. We immediately heard, "You can't do that." To which we responded, "Can't put the bullet back in the gun now, it's deformed."

"Nevertheless."

How Far Would You Go – Epilogue

“Listen, Lieutenant, it was good enough for Santa Anna and it’s worked fine for us. Our recidivism rate is zero. Can you say the same?”

“Well, uh, I guess not.”

“Right. Ok, you do it your way and we’ll do it our way. Now if you eliminate these roving bands of criminals we won’t have to kill anyone else. Besides, it was self-defense, they attacked first.”

“How do I know that, you didn’t leave any survivors for us to question?”

“Well, you could take my word for it. Or, you could ask any of the 7½ families here.”

“How do you get a half family?”

“Lucy is a widow.”

We argued some and eventually Sergeant Collins, newly promoted to Sergeant First Class, explained the ‘facts of life’ to the butter bar. Young, inexperienced Lieutenants have a tendency to follow the book a bit too closely. By the time they’ve advanced to Company Commander, Captain, they have a more realistic outlook and consider other relevant facts.

We continued to give Sgt. Collins Folgers for a while. Then we suggested that a group of soldiers make a trip to New Orleans and bring back a truckload. We wouldn’t mind having more for ourselves. Coffee wasn’t considered a critical supply and it took some time to arrange for a group of Louisiana NG to load a truck and transfer it north. Along the way, it seemed to shed pallets, but made it to St. Louis about half full. Our coffee was replaced 2:1 by a grateful Sergeant.

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Life returned to a new normal. We still grew much of our own food on the land we’d taken over. We grew enough of some crops to have trade goods and could trade for things we didn’t have, rice, coffee and salt come to mind. Over time, critical infrastructure was brought online. One of the first was electricity, which we had no need for, although most of the country did.

Gary Locke came out of the mountain and efforts began to arrange for elections since his term was long past. It would be paper ballots for the first election, a feat unto itself, and no ballot was to be considered spoiled unless both candidates for an office were checked. Even then, the remainder of the ballot would be considered.

It came as no great surprise that a third party won the Presidential election, people were fed up with both the Democrats and the Republicans. The third party was much like the old Libertarian party in its goals and favored strictly construing the Constitution. The Constitution wasn't broke, just the political system. The only question that remained was how far they wanted to roll back the Amendments. In the end, they didn't roll any back and the Constitution stood as Amended.

The reformed Supreme Court having had ample time to discuss the case before it and having reviewed Miller and other cases determined that the NFA went too far and was, in fact, unconstitutional. While a state or locality could issue reasonable laws, they couldn't violate the inalienable rights recognized by the Constitution. For example, if the state allowed one person to have a CCW, all citizens of the state could have a CCW under Equal Protection. They made several other examples and one might have thought they had California specifically in mind. A state couldn't ban assault weapons because the Militia used assault weapons. The state couldn't distinguish a particular firearm if law enforcement could have the firearm, ergo, .50 caliber rifles.

In so ruling, any number of state laws immediately came under the scrutiny of the BATFE who was being forced to work counter purpose of how they had worked for so many years. The states weren't prohibited from enacting laws that further penalized persons who used a firearm in the commission of a crime.

A new case was now before the court, third strike laws, specifically as applied in California. The court had previously reviewed and ruled on the California law, but the makeup of the court was different now and inmates had died in the California prison system for want of care in the days following the war.

Peace has a price, but should it be peace at any price? From my study of history, I think not. Where does one draw the line? Let me quote a former President:

Report on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba

October 22, 1962

Good evening my fellow citizens:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet Military buildup on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.

Upon receiving the first preliminary hard information of this nature last Tuesday morning at 9 a.m., I directed that our surveillance be stepped up. And having now confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on a course of action, this Government feels obliged to report this new crisis to you in fullest detail.

The characteristics of these new missile sites indicate two distinct types of installations. Several of them include medium range ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for a distance of more than 1,000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles, in short, is capable of striking Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Mexico City, or any other city in the southeastern part of the United States, in Central America, or in the Caribbean area.

Additional sites not yet completed appear to be designed for intermediate range ballistic missiles – capable of traveling more than twice as far – and thus capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru. In addition, jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated and assembled in Cuba, while the necessary air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base – by the presence of these large, long range, and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction – constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas, in flagrant and deliberate defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this Nation and hemisphere, the joint resolution of the 87th Congress, the Charter of the United Nations, and my own public warnings to the Soviets on September 4 and 13. This action also contradicts the repeated assurances of Soviet spokesmen, both publicly and privately delivered, that the arms buildup in Cuba would retain its original defensive character, and that the Soviet Union had no need or desire to station strategic missiles on the territory of any other nation.

The size of this undertaking makes clear that it has been planned for some months. Yet only last month, after I had made clear the distinction between any introduction of ground-to-ground missiles and the existence of defensive antiaircraft missiles, the Soviet Government publicly stated on September 11, and I quote, “the armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes,” that, and I quote the Soviet Government, “there is no need for the Soviet Government to shift its weapons ... for a retaliatory blow to any other country, for instance Cuba,” and that, and I quote their government, “the Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union.” That statement was false.

Only last Thursday, as evidence of this rapid offensive buildup was already in my hand, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told me in my office that he was instructed to make it clear once again, as he said his government had already done, that Soviet assistance to Cuba, and I quote, “pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba,” that, and I quote him, “training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments was by no means offensive, and if it were otherwise,” Mr. Gromyko went on, “the Soviet Government would never become involved in rendering such assistance.” That statement also was false.

Neither the United States of America nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a definite threat to peace.

For many years both the Soviet Union and the United States, recognizing this fact, have deployed strategic nuclear weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which insured that these weapons would not be used in the absence of some vital challenge. Our own strategic missiles have never been transferred to the territory of any other nation under a cloak of secrecy and deception; and our history – unlike that of the Soviets since the end of World War II – demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer any other nation or impose our system upon its people. Nevertheless, American citizens have become adjusted to living daily on the Bull's-eye of Soviet missiles located inside the U.S.S.R. or in submarines.

In that sense, missiles in Cuba add to an already clear and present danger – although it should be noted the nations of Latin America have never previously been subjected to a potential nuclear threat.

But this secret, swift, and extraordinary buildup of Communist missiles – in an area well known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States and the nations of the Western Hemisphere, in violation of Soviet assurances, and in defiance of American and hemispheric policy – this sudden, clandestine decision to station strategic weapons for the first time outside of Soviet soil – is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country, if our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe.

The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our unswerving objective, therefore, must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure their withdrawal or elimination from the Western Hemisphere.

Our policy has been one of patience and restraint, as befits a peaceful and powerful nation, which leads a worldwide alliance. We have been determined not to be diverted from our central concerns by mere irritants and fanatics. But now further action is required – and it is under way; and these actions may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of worldwide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth – but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and of the entire Western Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the

resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers. We are not at this time, however, denying the necessities of life as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948.

Second: I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup. The foreign ministers of the OAS, in their communique of October 6, rejected secrecy in such matters in this hemisphere. Should these offensive military preparations continue, thus increasing the threat to the hemisphere, further action will be justified. I have directed the Armed Forces to prepare for any eventualities; and I trust that in the interest of both the Cuban people and the Soviet technicians at the sites, the hazards to all concerned in continuing this threat will be recognized.

Third: It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo, evacuated today the dependents of our personnel there, and ordered additional military units to be on a standby alert basis.

Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security and to invoke articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action. The United Nations Charter allows for regional security arrangements – and the nations of this hemisphere decided long ago against the military presence of outside powers. Our other allies around the world have also been alerted.

Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our resolution will call for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

Seventh and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to abandon this course of world domination, and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and to transform the history of man. He has an opportunity now to move the world back from the abyss of destruction – by returning to his government's own words that it had no need to station missiles out-

side its own territory, and withdrawing these weapons from Cuba – by refraining from any action which will widen or deepen the present crisis – and then by participating in a search for peaceful and permanent solutions.

This Nation is prepared to present its case against the Soviet threat to peace, and our own proposals for a peaceful world, at any time and in any forum – in the OAS, in the United Nations, or in any other meeting that could be useful – without limiting our freedom of action. We have in the past made strenuous efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. We have proposed the elimination of all arms and military bases in a fair and effective disarmament treaty. We are prepared to discuss new proposals for the removal of tensions on both sides – including the possibility of a genuinely independent Cuba, free to determine its own destiny. We have no wish to war with the Soviet Union – for we are a peaceful people who desire to live in peace with all other peoples.

But it is difficult to settle or even discuss these problems in an atmosphere of intimidation. That is why this latest Soviet threat – or any other threat which is made independently or in response to our actions this week – must and will be met with determination. Any hostile move anywhere in the world against the safety and freedom of peoples to whom we are committed – including in particular the brave people of West Berlin – will be met by whatever action is needed.

Finally, I want to say a few words to the captive people of Cuba, to whom this speech is being directly carried by special radio facilities. I speak to you as a friend, as one who knows of your deep attachment to your fatherland, as one who shares your aspirations for liberty and justice for all. And I have watched and the American people have watched with deep sorrow how your nationalist revolution was betrayed – and how your fatherland fell under foreign domination. Now your leaders are no longer Cuban leaders inspired by Cuban ideals. They are puppets and agents of an international conspiracy which has turned Cuba against your friends and neighbors in the Americas – and turned it into the first Latin American country to become a target for nuclear war – the first Latin American country to have these weapons on its soil.

These new weapons are not in your interest. They contribute nothing to your peace and well-being. They can only undermine it. But this country has no wish to cause you to suffer or to impose any system upon you. We know that your lives and land are being used as pawns by those who deny your freedom.

Many times in the past, the Cuban people have risen to throw out tyrants who destroyed their liberty. And I have no doubt that most Cubans today look forward to the time when they will be truly free – free from foreign domination, free to choose their own leaders, free to select their own system, free to own their own land, free to speak and write and worship without fear or degradation. And then shall Cuba be welcomed back to the society of free nations and to the associations of this hemisphere.

My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can see precisely what course it will take or what costs or cas-

ualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead – months in which our patience and our will will be tested – months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our dangers. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.

The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are – but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high – and Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission.

Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right – not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

Thank you and good night.

He had a good speech writer for that one. My research failed to disclose who wrote the speech, but it set the right tone. No one really knew how close we came to WW III in 1962. It was only later that Robert McNamara revealed that.

Kennedy followed Eisenhower's lead in sending advisors to Vietnam. He was killed before he could reverse that position. No one will ever know whether or not he would have reversed his position. Anyone who might know is long since dead. If there's one thing Jan and I learned studying world and US history, it was the simple truth:

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

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